

Y. KARYAKIN - Y. PLIMAK

# HANS ROHN ANALYSES THE RUSSIAN MIND

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**PROGRESS PUBLISHERS**

**Moscow • 1966**

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

Ю. КАРЯКИН, Е. ПЛИМАК

МИСТЕР КОН  
ИССЛЕДУЕТ „РУССКИЙ ДУХ“

*На английском языке*

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## IN LIEU OF INTRODUCTION: PROFESSOR KOHN'S ACME

Acme is the Greek for "highest point", "point of perfection". When Greeks said a philosopher had reached his acme, they meant the zenith of his abilities, maturity of his ideas, transcendence of his creative work. This, to believe the American press, is the point Hans Kohn, Professor of the City College of New York and President of the International Society for the History of Ideas,<sup>1</sup> which was founded in the U.S.A. in 1959, has achieved.

Prof. Kohn has been engaged in research work for over forty years and has written a score of monographs. The list of his works alone—*World Order in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), *Revolutions and Dictatorships. Essays in Contemporary History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941), *Prophets and Peoples. Studies in 19th Century Nationalism* (New York, 1946), *The Twentieth Century. The Challenge to the West and Its Response* (New York, 1957), and *Nationalism. Its Meaning and History* (Princeton, 1955)—shows that he lays claim to being both historian and sociologist.

Hans Kohn is a versatile man, but his forte is the problem of nationalism. In this sphere, his American colleagues say, he is not merely "one of the leading historians of today" but indisputably the leading authority.

His main study on this subject is declared to be *The Idea of Nationalism*,<sup>2</sup> which has been published in the United

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<sup>1</sup> See report on his appointment in *The American Historical Review*, January 1960, Vol. LXV, No. 2, p. 481.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism. A Study of Its Origins and Background*, New York, 1944.

States in seven editions and translated into many languages. The glowing notices it was greeted with would be difficult indeed to match. "One of the most important books to appear in America during the past 25 years", a book that "promises to be an epoch-making work in American historiography", "the most brilliant, all-inclusive and incisive analysis of the ideological origins of nationalism which has yet appeared in any language", "one of the greatest accomplishments of our time"—so wrote some American historians in their reviews.

Latterly, the Professor has been applying his methodology to the history of diverse countries. Among the books he has written on this subject are *The Mind of Modern Russia* and *Basic History of Modern Russia*<sup>1</sup>. The former is a voluminous collection of excerpts from works by P. Y. Chaadayev, M. P. Pogodin, A. Mickiewicz, K. Havlíček, F. I. Tyutchev, A. S. Homyakov, V. G. Belinsky, N. G. Chernyshevsky, A. I. Herzen, N. Y. Danilevsky, V. S. Solovyov, V. I. Lenin, N. A. Berdayev and G. Fedotov.<sup>2</sup> Kohn comments on each text and outlines his views on Russian history in the Preface and the first chapter. In the second book the Professor deals in greater detail with the main stages and motive forces of Russian history and seeks to substantiate his conclusions by diverse historical documents. In citing original texts, Kohn sets himself the task of showing that he is not in the least biased in his appraisals. The bourgeois historian offers the American and British reader the pronouncements not only of Pogodin and Berdayev but Lenin too, not only tsarist manifestoes but Soviet statements. If that isn't objectivity, what is?

The jacket of *The Mind of Modern Russia* says: "These selections make fascinating reading in themselves. And, integrated and made more meaningful by Professor Kohn's introductions and commentaries, they help to fill one of the most urgent needs of the free world today—to discover the truth about Russia and to understand the basis upon which she built a Communist state."

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<sup>1</sup> *The Mind of Modern Russia (Historical and Political Thought of Russia's Great Age)*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1955, 2nd ed., 1957; *Basic History of Modern Russia. Political, Cultural and Social Trends*, New York, 1957.

<sup>2</sup> Given in the order in which they appear in the book.

What "truth about Russia" does the reader of the "free world" learn from Kohn's books?

Hans Kohn's basic thesis, which he repeats time and again in various forms, is that there is hardly any difference between Soviet Russia and tsarist Russia, that their similarity lies in their "totalitarianism", in their traditional hatred of the "free" West. "The West and its civilisation," Kohn writes, "represented everything that Lenin was determined to destroy. But he wished also to uproot all Western influence in Russia."<sup>1</sup>

In short, Lenin is proclaimed an enemy of the West. And this despite the fact that Lenin wrote and said hundreds of times that the Bolsheviks accepted all that was progressive and valuable in the West, that they were heirs of Western democratic and socialist traditions; despite the fact that these Leninist principles have been consistently implemented in the Soviet Union.

Hans Kohn does more than assert. He adduces "arguments" in proof of his assertions. To prove that he is right in regarding Lenin as the "leader" of the anti-Western forces, he cites (in *The Mind of Modern Russia*) two excerpts from Lenin's article "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx". They speak of the shift of the centre of the revolutionary movement from West to East, but naturally contain nothing like an appeal "to uproot all Western influence". Moreover, the master analyst, as Kohn's colleagues call him, distorts Lenin by substituting an ellipsis for the following words: "The fact that Asia, with its population of 800 million, has been drawn into the struggle for the same European ideals should inspire us with optimism and not despair."<sup>2</sup> In another place, where Lenin said the Chinese revolution was an event "undermining the rule of the European bourgeoisie", Kohn has him declare that it was an event "towards . . . achieving the overthrow of European mastery".<sup>3</sup> Thus, a stroke of the pen and Lenin the enemy of the European bourgeoisie becomes Lenin the enemy of Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia*, p. 247; V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 584.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia*, p. 236; V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 485.



*идет тишь.* Медленно, но неуклонно идет вперед процесс подбирания и собирания сил пролетариата, подготовки его к грядущим битвам.

Диалектика истории такова, что теоретическая победа марксизма заставляет врагов его *преодолеваться* марксистами. Внутренне-сгнивший либерализм пробует оживить себя в виде социалистического *оппортунизма*. Период подготовки сил для великих битв они истолковывают в смысле отката от этих битв. Улучшение положения рабов для борьбы против наемного рабства они разъясняют в смысле продажи рабами за пятак своих прав на свободу. Трусливо проповедуют «социальный мир» (т. е. мир с рабовладением), отречение от классовой борьбы и т. д. Среди социалистических парламентариев, разных чиновников рабочего движения и «сочувствующей» интеллигенции у них очень много сторонников.

### III

Не успели оппортунисты нахвалиться «социальным миром» и не необходимостью бурь при «демократии», как открылся новый источник величайших мировых бурь в Азии. За русской революцией последовали турецкая, персидская, китайская. Мы живем теперь как раз в эпоху этих бурь и их «обратного отражения» на Европе. Кановы бы ни были судьбы великой китайской республики, на которую теперь точат зубы разные «цивилизованные» гены, но никакие силы в мире не восстановят старого крепостничества в Азии, не сметут с лица земли героического демократизма народных масс в азиатских и полуазиатских странах.

Некоторых людей, невнимательных к условиям подготовки и развития массовой борьбы, доводило до отчаяния и до анархизма долгие отсрочки решительной борьбы против капитализма в Европе. Мы видим теперь, как близоруко и малодушно анархистское отчаяние.

Не отчаяние, а бодрость надо почерпать из факта вовлечения восьмисотмиллионной Азии в борьбу за те же европейские идеалы.

Азиатские революции показали нам ту же бесхарактерность и подлость либерализма, то же исключительное значение самостоятельности демократических масс, то же

Persian, and Chinese revolutions followed on the Russian revolution of 1905. We are now living right in the midst of the epoch of these storms and their reflex action on Europe. Whatever may be the fate of the great Chinese revolution, against which various civilized hyenas are now sharpening their teeth, no forces in the world will restore the old serfdom in Asia or eradicate from the earth the heroic democracy of the popular masses in the Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries.

The long postponement of the decisive struggle against capitalism in Europe has driven a few people, who are inattentive to the conditions for preparing and developing the mass struggle, to despair and anarchy. We now see how short-sighted and poor-spirited was this anarchist despair. . . .

The Asiatic revolutions have shown us the lack of character and the cowardice of liberalism. Anyone who talks about non-class politics or non-class socialism after the experience of Europe and Asia should simply be put in a cage and exhibited along with some Australian kangaroo.

After Asia, though not in an Asiatic manner, Europe also has begun to stir. The peaceful period 1872-1904 has gone forever. The high cost of living and the yoke of the trusts are causing an unheard-of sharpening of the economic struggle—which is shaking the liberalism of even the most corrupted sections of the English workers. A political crisis is ripening before our eyes even in the most die-hard bourgeois-junker country, in Germany. Furious piling up of armaments and the policy of imperialism are creating in contemporary Europe a kind of social peace which most nearly resembles a powder barrel. Meanwhile, the decay of all the bourgeois parties and the maturing of the proletariat go unswervingly forward.

Hans Kohn falsifies Lenin's texts. In his essays, he substitutes the traditional ellipses for a whole paragraph in which Lenin refutes his allegation that the Bolsheviks are the "enemies" of the West

And Kohn, of course, makes no mention whatever of the following statement by Lenin on the Chinese revolution: "Does that mean, then, that the materialist West has hopelessly decayed and that light shines only from the mystic, religious East? No, quite the opposite. It means that the East has definitely taken the Western path, that new *hundreds of millions* of people will from now on share in the struggle for the ideals which the West has already worked out for itself."<sup>1</sup>

Affirming further that the Russian Bolsheviks, acting in the spirit of "Eastern totalitarianism", rode roughshod over the people's will, and that the October Revolution was forced upon them, Kohn turns Lenin into a Blanquist. As "proof", he quotes excerpts from Lenin's article "Marxism and Insurrection". Here, too, the Professor resorts to the traditional ellipsis, substituting it for the following statement: to be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class, upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people, upon such a crucial moment in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy are strongest. "And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*," Lenin pointed out.<sup>2</sup> To be able to accuse the Bolsheviks of Blanquism, Kohn deliberately ignores these three conditions.

What is this? How is one to explain such juggling by an author who claims that "the first task of the historian is to find out by patient and painstaking research the true facts of the past"?<sup>3</sup> Are these "inaccuracies" another proof that Hans Kohn is a great scholar? It is proverbial that great scholars are absent-minded. But they are absent-minded in everything except the subject of their study. What is more, they are absent-minded in ordinary things because they concentrate too much on their subject. The biographies of outstanding scholars show with what scrupulousness they collected, checked and rechecked the facts. Every unwitting

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. H. Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 243-44; V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *The Twentieth Century. The Challenge to the West and Its Response*, New York, 1957, p. 242.

inaccuracy, even if it was the only one, was a source of profound disappointment to them. The scholar hastened to correct it. It was quite possible for him to misunderstand a fact or to explain it incorrectly, but he considered it absolutely inadmissible to ignore or distort it deliberately. There could be many facts he did not like, but he never made this a pretext for doctoring them. So came into existence one of the most fascinating and profound traditions in science—the tradition of professional integrity.

But when we turn to Kohn's works on Russian history, we find that "inaccuracies" are not an exception but a rule, not an accident but a system. *What* the Professor seeks to prove and *how* he does it are equally unscientific. He is "also" concentrated, but he concentrates only on one thing—on misrepresenting what he analyses. The President of the International Society for the History of Ideas, an organisation whose purpose is to develop and enrich scientific methodology, indulges in distorting quotations. The "great sociologist" resorts to petty manipulations, and can be caught by any schoolboy.<sup>1</sup> What is more, the Professor affirms that the "Western science" he represents respects . . . objective truth and that this is what distinguishes it from "non-objective" Marxism!

This allegation reminds us of an episode which occurred many decades ago. When the first volume of *Capital* came off the press, bourgeois science tried to ignore it. Bourgeois scientists did not say it was "one of the great accomplishments of our time" or "an epoch-making work", as they say of Kohn's books. Marx was not proclaimed "one of the leading scholars of the day". He was not made a professor nor was he elected president of any international science society.

The silence, however, was soon broken, in 1872. A campaign against *Capital* was launched in Germany, purportedly

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<sup>1</sup> Here, perhaps, it would be well to recall that, among many other things, Prof. Kohn is regarded by his colleagues as "one of the greatest teachers of our day". Kohn himself says he likes his teaching job and his association with young people. But young people are remarkable for their irreconcilability to dishonesty and lies. We are sure that sooner or later some pupil of the "great teacher" will realise that "the emperor is naked". And it may be assumed that American students, like all others, do not care to keep such facts a secret. . . .

under the banner of scientific integrity. The first attack was an article entitled "How Karl Marx Quotes" ("Wie Karl Marx zitiert"). The anonymous author (he turned out to be Prof. von Brentano) claimed that Marx, in expounding a statement by Gladstone, had "in form and substance" falsified a quotation (it said that the upper classes in Britain progressed at the expense of the lower classes). Von Brentano wrote with dignified irritation about "dishonesty", a "lying allegation", a "quotation entirely falsified", etc.

Marx proved that the quotation in question had been published by several newspapers. As for Brentano's reference to the publication where the meaning of Gladstone's words was the exact opposite to that in these newspapers, this too was soon straightened out. Marx did not distort Gladstone's statement. Gladstone himself "was astute enough to obliterate this passage, which, coming from an English Chancellor of the Exchequer, was certainly compromising".<sup>1</sup> The "champion of truth" shut up. Eleven years later, in 1883, Sedley Taylor, an Englishman, repeated von Brentano's attempt without taking the trouble to get to the bottom of the affair and, naturally, with the same success—or, rather, unsuccessfully. "The result of this whole professorial cobweb," Engels recalled, "spun out over two decades and two great countries, is that nobody has since dared to cast any other aspersion upon Marx's literary honesty."<sup>2</sup>

Even the most irreconcilable enemies of Marxism were compelled to admit that Marx was unusually honest, especially if one bears in mind the vast amount he had written. They could, and did, say that Marxism was "obsolete"; they could, and did, talk about the "erroneousness" of Marxism; but it occurred to very few to cast doubt on Marx's professional integrity.

It is not for nothing that they say that great historical events are apt to repeat themselves—if not in their original form, then at least in the form of farce. True, the "great event" in the given case, the Brentano-Taylor campaign, was too much of a farce in itself. Now, this professorial farce is being "squared", as it were: the "objective truth" is being

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<sup>1</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

defended against "dogmatic" Marxism by a learned falsifier, Prof. von Brentano's banner is being picked up by a man who well deserves having a work written about him under the title "How Hans Kohn Quotes".

But looking for articles on this theme in bourgeois literature would be a pure loss of time. What is more, the works of the "great historian" usually earn him bouquets. Kohn is thanked for his "serviceable books of high merit", for "well-chosen excerpts" and "introductions and commentaries", for "his breadth of knowledge and for his skill in presenting complex issues in a lucid manner"; reviewers go so far as to say that the Professor's books "possess the information necessary to forming an intelligent policy".

One of the Professor's admirers says:

"As historian, Hans Kohn has won the respect and friendship of his colleagues not only in his department at the City College of New York but throughout the United States. Here is the classic example of the twentieth-century mind working within the best traditions and high standards of modern scholarship. Hans Kohn has always remained the unbiased historian, never the historicist seeking to use history for political purposes."<sup>1</sup>

It would be naïve, of course, and it is too late, to try to convince the seventy-year-old "world-famous" professor and his colleagues that it is wrong to tell lies. But his books are not his affair only. They are published, read and publicised. Kohn's ideas are shared by scores and hundreds of bourgeois "Russian experts". The Kohns are a social phenomenon, they serve a definite policy.

That is why their really unscientific "works" require a scientific analysis. And to expose them one, unfortunately, has to engage in this thankless job.

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<sup>1</sup> See H. Kohn, *Reflections on Modern History. The Historian and Human Responsibility*, New York, 1963, p. VII.

## Chapter I

### HANS KOHN'S THEORY OF NATIONALISM

#### Opposing West to East

Honesty or dishonesty is by no means simply a personal quality of a scholar. Hans Kohn's ellipses are, as it were, the method, the technique, of his "scientific" work. But methods and "technique" derive from methodological and social views.

What is Kohn's methodology? It is extremely simple. The decisive factor of historical development in our day, the Professor says, is nationalism. Nationalism is supposed to have come into existence on the Atlantic coast, together with the British merchant "middle class", and then spread eastward. It is now a force operating on a world scale and representing a multiplicity of changeable and most diverse forms. Originally, to believe Kohn, nationalism embodied the individual's rights with respect to his state and brought him the "traditions of constitutional liberties and common law". In Britain, the cradle of nationalism, it could be observed, so to speak, in its original liberal purity. The farther it receded from Britain, the more its nature was corrupted by Eastern "traditionalism". Western nationalism, he alleges, brought the world a spirit of tolerance, compromise, humaneness and respect for the rights of other nations, while Eastern traditions perpetuated the spirit of violence, intolerance and national "egocentrism". In the East, nationalism ceased to be "a vehicle of individual liberty" and became "adoration of collective power". It was under the influence of "extreme"

Eastern traditions, in Kohn's opinion, that Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism and Pan-Asianism came into being. "Like the other two great Pan-movements of the twentieth century, Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism, Pan-Asianism completely broke with the Western liberal tradition and turned to totalitarianism."<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, Kohn reduces all the diverse national movements, all shades of national ideas, traditions and cultures to Western "liberal" nationalism and Eastern "totalitarian" nationalism.<sup>2</sup> Internal social changes did not alter the centuries-old single "national mind" of a country; people's character was inevitably determined by their ancestors' virtues or sins; West remained West, and East remained East. The conflict between the "liberal" West and the "totalitarian" East is the axis round which the whole of modern history revolves, the root cause of all developments in our day too.

Kohn's "theory" is not original. It was born when the West was colonising the East. It was expounded in the nineteenth century by that bard of British colonialism, Rudyard Kipling, when he wrote:

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and  
never the twain shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at  
God's great Judgment Seat.*<sup>3</sup>

Kohn is by far not the only one who upholds this obsolete myth today. The former imperialists needed it to justify the colonisation of the East; the present imperialists need it still more to fight the national liberation movement, to vilify socialism. Kohn's theme may be neither new nor original, but as far as the "fundamentality" of its elaboration is concerned, there is hardly anyone to equal Kohn in "Western science", past and present. For in the perspective of the conflict between the "two" forms of nationalism, he analyses the whole (sic!) of the history of civilisation, from the ancient Hebrews and Greeks to present-day developments.

That is evidently why Kohn's bourgeois colleagues rely

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Nationalism. Its Meaning and History*, pp. 29, 73.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, pp. 574-76.

<sup>3</sup> R. Kipling, "The Ballad of East and West" (see *Ballads and Barrackroom Ballads*, New York, 1899, p. 3).



on his analyses. Kohn's works help them get to what they call "the heart of the matter".<sup>1</sup> It is obviously for the same reason that the latest "Western" manuals like *The Idea of Colonialism*<sup>2</sup> or the important political issue of the periodical *Current History*, devoted wholly to "an analysis of the fifteen-year-old East-West conflict as it is reflected in United States foreign policy",<sup>3</sup> open up with the Professor's "editorials" and "introductions". And it is for the same reason too that we must analyse his "theory of nationalism".

Prof. Kohn likes to call himself an exponent of "objective Western science" which is now opposed (in full conformity with his conception) by Eastern "non-objective", "dogmatic" Marxism. But first let us compare Kohn's conclusions with the historical facts.

Kohn everywhere proceeds from the centuries-old national conflict between "West" and "East". But what can one elucidate in history with the aid of these geographical concepts? How will this "expert" explain, for example, the Holy Alliance of 1815, in which the participants were not only "Eastern" Prussia or Russia but also "Western" France, and why was "liberal" England one of the sponsors of its measures? Is communism an expression of the Western or Eastern "mind"? Why did it come into existence in Europe and then spread throughout the world? Why did the "Western" France of Thiers and the "Eastern" Germany of Bismarck join forces to put down the Paris uprising during the Commune days? And why was the defence of the Paris Commune the vital cause of the revolutionaries of both West and East? Why was Dreyfus persecuted in "free" republican France in the same manner as Beylis was persecuted in "totalitarian" autocratic Russia? Why did Britain and France ally themselves with "Eastern" Russia against "Eastern" Germany in 1914, and

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<sup>1</sup> See V. M. Dean, *The Nature of the Non-Western World*, "A Mentor Book", New York, 1957, p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> *The Idea of Colonialism* (New York, 1958) is one of the latest creations of American "historiography" of the cold-war era. In this collection of essays a score of "experts" in national problems, led by Hans Kohn, seek to prove that modern Western colonialism is a communist propaganda "myth" (sic!) and at the same time persuade "backward areas of the world" that "the future of these areas is not necessarily assured by their headlong rush into independence".

<sup>3</sup> *Current History*, October 1959, Vol. 37, No. 218, p. 193.

why did Britain and France take part together with "Eastern" Kaiser Germany in the intervention against "Eastern" Russia immediately after the establishment of Soviet power? And why did the proletariat in the Western countries demand "Hands off Soviet Russia"? Why, in our day, has little Western Cuba risen against U.S. imperialism? Is American McCarthyism an Eastern or Western phenomenon? Doesn't it prove once again that fascism in all its forms is a legitimate offspring of the bourgeoisie? We could pose hundreds, nay thousands, of questions, but Kohn's "theory" of nationalism has no convincing answer to any of them.

But if you tell Kohn that his "theory" does not correspond to a whole lot of facts, he will retort there are a lot of others to which it does. The Professor points out, for instance, that representatives of every nation have definitely common traits and he expresses this community by such concepts as "British mind", "German mind", "Russian mind", etc. He devotes all his historiographical works to the analysis of each such mind separately, and as a result of this "analysis" he has discovered such categories as "Western" and "Eastern" nationalism.

No historian, of course, will deny that there is some sort of unity within every nation. A nation is a community of people which formed in the process of the development of bourgeois relations. It is not only a community of "mind"; it is an economic, territorial and linguistic community. But it is unity that is being rent by extremely profound contradictions, a community nurturing deep antagonisms. The proletarian and the capitalist, the working class and the bourgeoisie live in one and the same country, speak one and the same language, have the same traits of national character, and the same rights formally guaranteed them by the constitution. But do they live the same, do they enjoy equality within the framework of one and the same regime of "liberty under law" which the Professor praises so highly? Do they enjoy the same opportunities and conditions in the case of leisure and work? Are their incomes the same and do they wield the same political power? Who prepares and unleashes predatory imperialist wars—the proletariat or the bourgeoisie? Who dies on the battlefield and who profits by war? Was it not in the "cradle" of Kohn's nationalism, in the soil of Merry Old

England that the concept took root that the proletariat and the capitalists constituted "two nations" within one nation? Was not this concept confirmed and proved correct by the history of all bourgeois nations, both in the "liberal" West and the "totalitarian" East?

Kohn says that in modern history—as was the case during the French bourgeois revolution of 1789, the Russian Patriotic War of 1812, etc.—the two nations often acted as a single whole. But, for truth's sake, it should be said that in these cases too the foreign policy contradictions and the differences between the nations were of class nature, that it was only temporarily that the national liberation struggle relegated the class antagonism rising in society to the background.

The entire bourgeois French nation, with the exception of a handful of overthrown aristocrats, rose, in the autumn of 1792, when the country was threatened by the reactionary monarchist states of semi-feudal Europe. But did the Girondists and the Montagnards, the popular masses and the big bourgeoisie play the same role in repulsing the interventionists? And was not that same France the arena of incessant class struggle during the revolutionary war and all the time after it? What about the struggles for power among diverse sections of the bourgeoisie in the 1790s, the Babeuf plot, the revolts of 1830, 1848 and 1871?

In the early nineteenth century the European nations, Russia included, waged a struggle against the French conquest-aspiring big bourgeoisie. But did the Russian landowners and the peasants put up the same kind of fight in 1812? Did the former give the latter land and freedom to commemorate the achievement of "national unity"? Did the Russian peasant give up his struggle after 1812 and were not there revolutionary situations in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s and the revolutions of 1905-07 and 1917?

In the Second World War the peoples of Britain, France and the United States fought to defeat the Hitler coalition. But was it not the policy of the ruling reactionary classes of these countries which enabled the nazis to unleash war? Did not this same policy hamper the liberation struggle? And is it not as a result of the policy of these same reactionary forces that German militarism is again reviving in the centre of Europe? .

Even when nations join forces in a just liberation war, the acute contradictions between the antagonistic classes of the given country remain. History knows a great many unjust, predatory wars in which the ruling classes *disguised* their selfish interests as national interests. "The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war," Marx wrote, commenting on Bismarck's alliance with the butcher Thiers, who was ruthlessly suppressing the revolt of the Paris proletariat. "And this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out into civil war."<sup>1</sup>

We might remind the Professor of the terrible bloody hang-over which followed the European nations' patriotic intoxication in the First World War. Millions of people died in 1914-18 for imperialist profits and division of colonies, thinking they were fighting for their country, against the enemy of their nation.

Yes, the semblance of national unity in modern and contemporary history of bourgeois countries by far does not conform to the essence of phenomena, and the moment is by far not a whole, not the entire history, as Prof. Kohn presumes. And it is not accidental that when Kohn turns to well-established, recurring historical facts, there remains not a trace of his own "theory". After speaking of the "unity" of the French nation, he admits that "this national unity did not last long. Political and religious divisions split the nation".<sup>2</sup> And here is another interesting admission. Nationalism, he writes, often served "as the justification for the authority of the state and the legitimation of its use of force, both against its own citizens and against other states".<sup>3</sup> (sic!) But these are isolated reservations on Kohn's part, not a principled assessment of facts on their merits.

History refutes conjectures concerning the centuries-old single "mind of nations"—how, then, did the universally known concepts "West" and "East" get into sociology? It is a fact that the European countries did outstrip the countries of the

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<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1958, p. 540.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Nationalism. Its Meaning and History*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

East in their development when the bourgeois nations were in the process of formation, but Kohn's "mind" has absolutely nothing to do with it. It was not Western or Eastern nationalism but the level of social development which determined both the progress and the lag of one or another country all through modern history. The geographical concepts "West" and "East" merely served to define the various stages of social development or to express the antagonism of hostile class forces. In this respect, the antagonism of West and East fully corresponded, for instance, to the antagonism of the free bourgeois North and the slave-owning South during the American Civil War. And since Kohn admits in his works that the national antagonism between South and North was due to the difference in their "social structure",<sup>1</sup> why shouldn't he apply the same principle to the history of other nations? Everything would then be in its right place and the concepts which in the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries were expressive of the difference between capitalism and feudalism, would acquire an entirely new, concrete historical meaning. In the twentieth century, when the East has ushered in an era of socialist revolutions, these same concepts are sometimes used to conventionally express a new social difference, a new division of the countries of the world—into capitalism and socialism.

### **A propos of the "Permanency" of National Traditions**

When there are not enough facts to back his "theory of nationalism", Kohn resorts to the aid of authority. In his Preface to *The Mind of Modern Russia* we read: "François Guizot, who lived through the French revolutions of the last decade of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, was more fortunate as historian and moralist than as statesman and politician. With a profound insight into national history, he wrote that 'when nations have existed for a long and glorious time, they cannot break with their past, whatever they do; they are influenced by it at the very moment when they work to destroy it; in the midst of the most glaring transformation they remain fundamentally in character and

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Nationalism. Its Meaning and History*, p. 63.

destiny such as their history has formed them. Even the most daring and powerful revolution cannot abolish national traditions of long duration. Therefore, it is most important, not only for the sake of intellectual curiosity but also for the good management of international affairs, to know and to understand these traditions.'<sup>1</sup>

Irrespective of the subjective moments which guided Guizot when he formulated the credo of his methodology (by 1857, when he wrote these words, he had long been associated with reaction and was seeking to use the traditions of the past as a weapon in the struggle against the revolutionary democracy of the present), there was some sense in his argument. For, despite the good intentions of their participants, even the most radical bourgeois revolutions could not break with many evils of the old regime, and, primarily, put an end to the exploitation of man by man. But this permanency of the traditions of feudal and bourgeois society was due only, and exceptionally, to one circumstance: to the fact that power passed into the hands of a new, equally exploiting class. It is not for nothing that Guizot is called the historian of the Restoration. France restored much of the old regime in the nineteenth century (and Guizot became a Minister in the reactionary government) only because in the process of revolutionary development the democratic elements were either annihilated or removed from political leadership (and, therefore, from dominance in the country's national tradition), only because the struggle between the two nations within the French nation ended in a temporary victory for the reactionary big bourgeoisie, with which François Guizot, historian and politician, had thrown in his lot.

In expressing this objective moment of history in his formula, Guizot undoubtedly committed one of the most widespread errors: he elevated the specific traits of transition from one exploiting formation to another (and, what is more, the specific transitional traits of France in the Restoration period) to the level of the general law of history.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia*, p. VII. The excerpt is taken by H. Kohn from *Essais sur l'histoire de France* by François Guizot, Paris, 1860, pp. IV-V.

But there have been different revolutions and different traditions. Bourgeois revolutions strengthen the tradition of exploitation and oppression instead of abolishing it. Socialist revolutions, on the other hand, for ever break with such "national traditions", and give birth to, strengthen and develop completely different traditions—traditions of struggle against all exploitation, against all oppression. "The tradition of all the dead generations," Marx wrote, commenting on bourgeois revolutions, "weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living." But he had a different thing to say about the proletarian revolution. This revolution, he wrote, "cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future".<sup>1</sup> And when Kohn, clinging to Guizot's error, quotes him, he merely measures socialist revolutions by the yardstick of bourgeois revolutions. What he tries to do, and purely sophistically, is to apply Guizot's words, which are true only in relation to the national traditions of bourgeois society, to socialism.

True, it is customary to speak of deep-rooted, almost "inherent" national traits of character of one or another nation (Guizot's formula disproportionately mixes them with political traditions): of German orderliness and accuracy, American efficiency, Russian large-heartedness, English self-control, etc. There is much that is true in these definitions, although it is impossible to reveal national character fully with the aid of two or three definitions. But even in these national traits there is nothing mystical. Their origin is explained wholly by the historical living conditions prevailing in the countries concerned. Moreover, these traits manifest themselves differently among the different classes of one and the same nation. Lastly, they are not permanent; they change.

Speaking of the permanency of national traditions, Kohn did not have to refer to Guizot. He could have quoted the following statement by another authority he knows well: "The judgments of observers concerning the character of national groups are coloured in varying degrees by the political exigencies of the situation and the sentimental attitudes of the observer. *It seems extremely doubtful whether any*

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<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1958, pp. 247, 249.

*judgment about a permanent national character of a people has any scientific value.*" The author of these just words is a recognised expert in the theory of nationalism. His name is Hans Kohn. He drew this conclusion in his book *World Order in Historical Perspective*, which was published in 1942. Two years later, publishing *The Idea of Nationalism* and inserting this whole paragraph in it, he threw out (without replacing them with his traditional ellipses) the words we have italicised<sup>1</sup> (see pp. 24-25 of the present volume). It's a pity, for they would have made a splendid epigraph to his latter-day studies of "the mind of modern Russia", to his claims about the traditional "reactionary" nationalism of the Eastern countries.

But we are a bit hasty. What Kohn formerly said and wrote and what has made him alter his views so radically will be the subject of a special analysis. Our present task is to acquaint ourselves more closely with his theory of ideological influences.

### **The Theory of Ideological Influences**

Inasmuch as the world, says Kohn, has always been divided into West and East and inasmuch as the Western and Eastern countries—England and Russia, for instance—represent "the opposite poles of development", both by "their political ideas and social structure",<sup>2</sup> "Westernisation", that is, the influence of "Western nationalism", or, to be more precise, the influence of liberal English ideas, was and is the only factor of development of the "backward" Eastern countries.

Here is the essence of Kohn's theory. The pre-history of the "English national idea" goes back to the hoary antiquity: it bears the imprint of "Jewish Messianism" and "supreme loyalty to the political community" developed in ancient Greece. During the Reformation and Renaissance periods the Old Testament and the ancient classics were read in a new

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Kohn, *World Order in Historical Perspective*, p. 79, and his *The Idea of Nationalism*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, pp. 560-61.



The judgments of observers concerning the character of national groups are colored to a varying degree by the political exigencies of the situation or the sentimental attitudes of the author. It seems extremely doubtful

whether any judgment about a permanent national character of a people has any scientific value. Between the extremes which

may be illustrated by a statement of John Morley that "in the literature of any people we perceive under all contrasts of form produced by variable social influences the one national character from first to last," and the opposite by J. M. Robertson that "the nation considered as a continuous and personalized organism is in large measure a metaphysical dream," we may accept the position of Sir Francis Galton that "different aspects of the multifarious character of man respond to different calls from without, so that the same individual, and much more the same race, may behave very differently at different epochs." Men and men's character are extremely complex; the more so, the less primitive the man is. This holds true even more of a highly complex group like a nation. An

duce very few, if any, metaphysicians, musicians, or poets of renown; but on the other hand they have become successful and ruthless bullies and hard and efficient masters in modern industry and business. The Mongols under Genghis Khan were warriors famous for their belligerence, and brought all Asia and half of Europe under their yoke. In the sixteenth century, through the adoption of Lamaist Buddhism, their old spirit was completely broken and they were turned into peaceful and pious men. Under the influence of the Soviet government and its revolutionary propaganda the wild instincts of the race have been reawakened, and a new and different consciousness has started to animate the Mongol people and to break their religious inhibitions.

The judgments of observers concerning the character of national groups are colored in varying degrees by the political exigencies of the situation and the sentimental attitudes of the observer. Between the extremes—which may be illustrated by a statement of Henry Morley that “in the literature of any people we perceive under all contrasts of form produced by variable social influences the one national character from first to last,” and the opposite by J. M. Robertson that “the nation considered as a continuous and personalized organism is in large measure a metaphysical dream”—we may accept the position of Sir Francis Galton that “different aspects of the multifarious character of man respond to different calls from without, so that the same individual, and much more the same race, may behave very differently at different epochs.”<sup>6</sup> Men and men’s character are extremely complex; the more so, the less primitive men are. This holds true even more of a highly complex group like the nation. An immense diversity of individuals goes into making up a nation, and during the lifetime of a nation the most diverse influences are exercised upon it, molding and transforming it. For growth and change are the laws under which all historical phenomena fall.

Hans Kohn falsifies his own works. Copying his “theory of nationalism” from one book into another, the Professor omits the thesis which repudiates his “latest conclusion” regarding the permanent character of national traditions

light. "In both of them the seeds for rising national consciousness were found," Kohn writes.<sup>1</sup>

After that the idea of nationalism was proclaimed by the "lone voice" of Machiavelli. Lastly, in the period of the bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth century, there appeared in England two men—first John Milton and then John Locke—who proclaimed the idea of "personal liberty" and of the state's responsibility before the people. Subsequently, English "nationalism" spread to Continental Europe. It was under its influence, Prof. Kohn says, that the French philosophers "fought in the eighteenth century against the authoritarianism, the intolerance, and the censorship of their church and state". France, in her turn, became the intermediary through which the ideas of "liberal English nationalism" became known abroad. "Thereby the national and historical liberties of Englishmen gained universal importance," Kohn writes.<sup>2</sup>

How this "English" idea spread farther East we learn from Kohn's history of Russia. The Professor divides this history into four periods: Kiev, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Moscow again.

He does not say anything intelligible about the Kiev period, probably because in its development "Eastern" Kiev was not inferior to the "West". In fact, in many respects it was its superior, for it was then one of the cradles of progress in Europe. In the next—the Moscow—period, Russia was isolated from England and, consequently, did not develop, Kohn says. She was dominated by the "Mongol and Byzantine tradition". The admittance of "Western" influences in the St. Petersburg period started her off on the path of progress which, however, was slowed down in every possible way by the "Eastern" traditions. In the fourth period (starting with 1918) the capital of Russia was transferred back to Moscow, the country was again isolated from the West, and this, the author bemoans, brought "to an end", if only temporarily, the contemporary period of Russian history! "Russia," Kohn sums up, "was the first great 'backward' country to be subjected to the process of Westernisation with

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Nationalism. Its Meaning and History*, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19.

its creation of a Westernised intelligentsia, which accepted Western ideas and tried to apply them in a milieu which was socially and ideologically unprepared for them."<sup>1</sup>

No historian, of course, will deny that countries influence one another ideologically. *Every* country has a definite period of "apprenticeship" in its history, and that is nothing to be ashamed of. It is a matter of general knowledge that the development of bourgeois nations under capitalism was neither even nor harmonious. At different times different countries paid a different price to eliminate their backwardness and win a place among the "civilised" nations. In certain circumstances, "apprenticeship" undoubtedly helped young nations accelerate their development, make up for lost time, and overcome feudal stagnation and conservatism. "One nation can and should learn from others," Marx stressed.<sup>2</sup> But it does not at all follow from the admission of all these indisputable facts that Kohn's "theory" is correct. On the contrary, the facts repudiate it.

To begin with, the very fact that countries influence one another ideologically smashes to smithereens the Professor's allegations concerning the opposite paths of development taken by West and East, and proves the reverse. It is only because Russia and the West moved in the same direction in their social development that Russia, for instance, could enter into spiritual intercourse with the West and "learn" from it. As for English nationalism, it was the international bourgeois content of the English revolution, and not its national form which Kohn plays up, which determined the impact its ideas (notably, liberalism) had on the Continent in the epoch of bourgeois transformations in Europe.

Furthermore, one should not confuse internal and external factors of development and the main and secondary causes, as Kohn constantly does. It was not the progressive "Western influences" which started off backward Eastern countries on their path to progress. It was rather the progress of these countries, following on the heels of their economic and social

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Reflections on Colonialism*. See *The Idea of Colonialism*, New York, 1958, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, pp. 9-10.

changes, which gave these influences access to them. The seeds of Western liberation ideology would have never sprouted on Russian soil had not this soil been ploughed up by class struggles. For decades before the St. Petersburg period Russia had been building up commodity production, developing a single national market and strengthening the centralised absolutist state—in short, creating the historical need for closer ties with Europe—the ties which found expression in Tsar Peter's reforms. It was in the epoch of the "enlightened absolutism" of Catherine II, at a time when progressive Russian philosophers were turning to the anti-feudal ideology of the West, that Russia was swept by a wave of peasant unrest which ended in a big peasant war, that the first signs appeared of the crisis of serfdom—in short, that conditions became ripe for adopting anti-feudal ideas.

To assimilate and apply the achievements of advanced countries, the more backward countries must, moreover, be independent. India and Burma, for instance, were united with "liberal" England in the British colonial empire for almost two centuries—and could there be any closer "ties" than that? And yet both actually remained outside the framework of history and progress until the "native" revolutionary forces defied the British colonialists and launched a national liberation struggle.

It should be noted, moreover, that besides her liberal ideas and Milton and Locke, the England of the seventeenth century had her Levellers and John Lilburne who represented the British bourgeois democratism which Prof. Kohn has completely "forgotten". The role of the Levellers, like that of the Jacobins, writes A. L. Morton, the British historian, "was to carry the movement to positions which could not be permanently held but whose temporary seizure safeguarded the main advance".<sup>1</sup> Contrary to Kohn's claims, it was not English liberalism which played the decisive progressive role in Europe and America in the eighteenth century. The American revolutionaries, for instance, drew from Locke's principle of people's sovereignty conclusions which were alien

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<sup>1</sup> A. L. Morton, *A People's History of England*, London, 1938, p. 247.

to English liberalism by urging the people to rise in arms against the oppressors, against England's "liberal" king. In writing his political works, Locke did not dream that he was producing a textbook for American revolutionaries.<sup>1</sup> The French philosophers did not stop at Locke either. France's political development was decisively influenced by the ideas of the American revolutionaries and the democratism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his pupils. This democratism is plain "distortion" of the English idea, Kohn proclaims, and accuses it of an "outburst of collective passions hostile to individual rights". Yet this same Western democratism also served as an important ideological source of progressive thinking in eighteenth-century Russia—there it was interpreted in the light of unusually acute class antagonism between the serf and the landowner.<sup>2</sup>

If we turn from the eighteenth to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we shall see that there can be no question of Western bourgeois ideas exerting a dominant progressive influence on Eastern countries. As a matter of fact, in the modern stage of history, Western ideas—and the Professor by-passes this in silence too—were not reduced only to ideas of liberal "English freedom" or to its "distortion" in the form of Rousseau's theory. The contradictions of the bourgeois system engendered utopian socialism practically at its very inception, and later scientific socialism. It is these Western ideas which Kohn has forgotten that had the greatest progressive effect on Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. When the conditions for their adoption were not ripe, they served—as in the other countries of the East—as an ideological colour for anti-feudal slogans. When the proletariat appeared

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<sup>1</sup> See J. C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution*, Boston, 1943, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Especially noteworthy (a question Kohn does not even raise) was the emergence of kindred ideas and theories among philosophers who did not influence one another directly. *The Journey from Petersburg to Moscow* by Alexander Radishchev, the great Russian revolutionary, is strikingly like *The Testament* by Jean Meslier, the great French revolutionary, although Radishchev did not know of his existence. This proves once again that the formation of ideology in any one country is by no means limited to "borrowing" ideas. Similar historical conditions can and do engender similar ideas; influences merely accelerate this process.

in the East, it armed itself, with the aid of the revolutionary intelligentsia, with Western scientific socialism, which greatly accelerated the development of its class consciousness and facilitated its victory.

What is more, both in West and East, prominent philosophers never confined themselves simply to repeating Locke's formulas or other "borrowed" ideas. They developed these ideas but did not "distort" them, as the Professor claims. They amplified and further advanced progressive ideas, seeking to answer the questions posed by the social, economic and political processes in their countries.

And, lastly, there is this very important circumstance. Even in the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries there was, and could be, no homogeneous progressive ideological influence by the West on the East. Since both West and East were split into antagonistic classes, there were progressive and reactionary Western influences and different attitude to them on the part of the different classes in the East. With the exception of the rare periods when they flirted with "liberalism", the champions of autocratic Russia always stifled and banished progressive Western ideas, and the bureaucratic "milieu" was indeed "socially and ideologically unprepared for them". Conversely, the defenders of the oppressed classes always avidly imbibed, digested and developed the revolutionary ideas of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Moreover, there was no unilateral Western influence on the East, but mutual influence among the Eastern and Western countries, with its degree depending on the level of social development of the country concerned. European civilisation itself was the heir of the ancient cultures of the East (Prof. Kohn partly admits that in outlining the pre-history of English nationalism), and although Europe subsequently outstripped Asia in its social and cultural development, this historical peculiarity of the era of ascendant capitalism did not become a peculiarity of history in general. It is perfectly true that democratic and socialist Russia owes a great deal to progressive West. But it is equally true that the leading progressives of "Eastern" Russia, though oppressed and persecuted by tsarism, contributed considerably to the international culture of democratism and socialism. "We take

pride," Lenin wrote, "in the resistance to these outrages put up from our midst, from the Great Russians; in *that* midst having produced Radishchev, the Decembrists and the revolutionary commoners of the seventies; in the Great-Russian working class having created, in 1905, a mighty revolutionary party of the masses; and in the Great-Russian peasantry having begun to turn towards democracy and set about overthrowing the clergy and the landed proprietors. . . . The Great-Russian nation, *too*, has created a revolutionary class, because it, *too*, has proved capable of providing mankind with great models of struggle for freedom and socialism, and not only with great pogroms, rows of gallows, dungeons, great famines and great servility to priests, tsars, landowners and capitalists."<sup>1</sup>

Kohn's allegations about a "single" Russian mind cannot cancel out the Russian people's great struggle for freedom, the struggle which in 1917 liberated all the nations of Russia from slavery and brought the "prisoners of starvation" and the "wretched of the Earth" into the mighty liberation movement. The patriotism of Russian revolutionary democrats and their communist successors had nothing in common with national exclusiveness or Eastern "nationalism", as Kohn would have one believe. This patriotism always combined organically with internationalism, for the Bolsheviks' activity was wholly directed at furthering the interests of the oppressed classes, interests common to both West and East.

Speaking of mutual influence today, we do not deny that the East has been learning and will learn all there is progressive in the West. But the East has now gone far ahead in its social development and already "reveals to *all* countries something, and something very essential, of their near and inevitable future".<sup>2</sup> It is this vast and ever-growing impact of socialist ideas upon the West that has impelled the President of the International Society for the History of Ideas to study the "Russian mind" and seek to prove the national "narrow-mindedness" of Leninism by inserting ellipses in Lenin's quotations.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 103-04.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works* (Three-Vol. ed.), Vol. 3, pp. 375-76.



## The "Civilising Mission" of Western Colonialism

If one is to believe Hans Kohn, Western colonialism greatly accelerated the "Westernisation" of the backward East. In his *Reflections on Colonialism* he writes: "Thanks to colonialism, for the first time capable native cadres for the administration of the country and for all walks of civilised life have come into existence. Many of the new 'nations' (Kohn's quotation marks—*Authors*) like India, Indonesia, and Ghana owe their existence as states and their potential cohesion as nations to the colonial regimes."<sup>1</sup>

True, if one is to believe the same Kohn, the "natives" were never ones to show gratitude. After acquiring a "Western education", the Eastern intelligentsia would start "envying" the welfare of the Western countries, and instead of being grateful to their "benefactors" they fought them. "The more liberal a colonial regime was, the more bitter an anti-colonialism did it produce," the Professor affirms.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the root causes of the national liberation struggle in the East were the "freedoms" brought by the Western colonialists and not their oppression of the local population. "It is a widespread propaganda claim," Kohn goes on reflecting, "that Western imperialism introduced poverty, wars, racial discrimination, and economic exploitation into Asia and Africa. This is not the case. Poverty has existed in Asia and Africa since time immemorial, as it existed in Europe until the rise of liberalism and capitalism. . . . As far as historical memory goes, there has been perpetual warfare in Asia and Africa. . . . And economic exploitation has always been a universal situation."<sup>3</sup> Let us dwell on these "reflections" on colonialism: there is perhaps no other passage in Kohn's works which so obviously reveals the utter hypocrisy of his "theory" of nationalism, its reactionary essence and falsity.

No historian with any respect for facts will claim that the semi-patriarchal East was a paradise before the appearance of European colonialists, that it did not know exploita-

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Reflections on Colonialism*. See *The Idea of Colonialism*, New York, 1958, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

tion, wars and poverty (although the facts show that the "backward East" had never been exploited, massacred and ruined so *badly* as under the "progressive" colonial administration).

Prof. Kohn analyses the pre-colonial past of the East and describes what it was before colonisation, but the crux of the matter lies in the history of its colonisation, in what the East has become as a result of it. In Europe too the bourgeoisie knew of no methods of promoting civilisation other than by violence and oppression, yet nowhere did the antagonistic, inhumane nature of bourgeois progress manifest itself so forcefully as in the colonies of Asia, Africa and America. Extermination of national cultures and nations, hunting down of Negroes to be shipped by the million to the slave markets across the ocean, destruction of irrigation systems, famines wiping out native populations, abnormal, lopsided development of the industries the colonialists were interested in, ruin of millions of handicraftsmen, fabulous profits from and semi-slave forms of labour at colonial enterprises, suppression of all freedom of thought, prisons and massacres of thousands upon thousands of people—such is the real history of the "Westernisation" of the colonial East Prof. Kohn is glorifying. "One has only to compare the development of independent European or North American countries with that of the colonial countries of Africa during the past century to see that the path of colonialism is one of retrogression, of slow death, destruction and degradation for the enslaved countries," said the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to the Colonial Countries and Peoples, submitted by the Soviet delegation to the Fifteenth Session of the U.N. General Assembly in 1960.

"Industry, transport, agriculture, science and culture have attained a high level in the economically developed countries, atom-powered sea-going ships have been built and artificial heavenly bodies launched into outer space, while Africa, a region of fabulous riches, has been lagging behind and has become a continent of hunger. The agricultural implements mainly used are, just as thousands of years ago, the hoe, wooden plough and pointed stakes. . . .

"There is a veritable abyss between the independent states with highly developed industries and the colonial countries;

and yet there was a time when Asia and Africa cradled great civilisations that enriched the cultures and civilisations of other peoples."

The history of the "Westernisation" of the colonies gives an especially graphic picture of the antagonistic nature of bourgeois progress, of its devastating results for the "backward" nations.

The tiny bits of civilisation handed out by the "solicitous" colonialists cost the "backward" nations a great deal; what is more, it was only the chosen few and not the peoples of these countries who enjoyed the fruit of civilisation. In *The Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote that after 187 years of British rule "accompanied, as we are told, by strenuous attempts on the part of the British to improve its condition and to teach its people the art of self-government", the population of the once prosperous provinces of India, like Bengal, for instance, was "a miserable mass of poverty-stricken, starving and dying people".<sup>1</sup>

True, Kohn may say that if this is not "communist propaganda" it is at least a prejudiced statement by a man infected by "Eastern nationalism". Well, let us then quote an organisation which, in the eyes of the Professor himself, stands above both "West" and "East"—the United Nations. When India broke free from her imperialist "benefactors" in 1947, her population was about 90 per cent illiterate (as against approximately 5 per cent in metropolitan Britain), the average life span was 27 years (62-66 in Britain), annual per capita income was \$57 in India and \$773 in Britain. These few dry figures suffice to repudiate volumes on grandiloquent professorial disquisitions on the "services" done by the British colonialists to Eastern nations. And just as few dry figures about the present flourishing culture and economy of Russia's former colonial outskirts suffice to belie Kohn's allegations concerning "Soviet colonialism". The people of India were downtrodden and deprived of the fruit of modern culture and the most elementary blessings all through the two centuries of British colonial rule. And in the forty-odd years of Soviet rule the former colonial outskirts of Russia

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<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*. New York, 1946, pp. 295-96.

have in many respects outstripped not only their neighbours but certain Western countries as well. The output of large-scale industry in the Soviet republics of Central Asia has increased more than sixty times over. These republics, once almost 100 per cent illiterate, have built thousands of schools and hundreds of higher educational establishments. There are on an average 88 students for every 10,000 of the population, and that is twice as many as in France and almost three times as many as in Italy or West Germany.

This comparison of the destructive "fruit" of British colonialism with the creative results of Soviet national policy shows graphically the difference between the two paths of progress-bourgeois and socialist. The first path is that of social contrasts and political violence, with one country and one class enriching themselves at the expense of another country and another class. In the countries taking the second path, the fruits of progress go to the masses, the people, and not to the exploiters and the chosen few.

Prof. Kohn tries to hide these indisputable facts behind a heap of sophistic arguments. "Future historians," he exclaims in *The Twentieth Century*, "will recognise that modern Western colonialism, especially British expansion, has done in recent periods on the whole more good than evil to the subject peoples."<sup>1</sup> History will show, he repeats in *Reflections on Colonialism*, which colonialism, Eastern or British, is "better". But history has long passed its verdict on this issue. One will be right in saying that any colonialism is "bad". British colonialism was and is the same classic system of tyranny and violence, oppression and enslavement, as was the colonial system of Russian tsarism. The colonial brigandage in modern times proves once again that it is not among the nations of the East and West that one should seek for a "single mind", but among the Eastern and Western exploiters. This real, and not illusory, unity of the Russian tsarist and Western liberal butchers and oppressors found its expression in their deeds and was sealed by the blood of the oppressed nations. The British "liberal" bullies set no worse examples of solicitude for the "backward" nations than the tsarist, drowning the sepoy revolt in blood and keeping millions of

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *The Twentieth Century*, p. 230.

Asians and Africans in a state of oppression and poverty found only in the most backward tsarist colonies. The peoples of Egypt, Guatemala, the Congo and the Dominican Republic experienced the blessings of the "Western" colonialists' touching solicitude, and had it not been for the historic Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, the beastly imperialist "civilisation" would probably still be flourishing in the wide expanses of India and China, Indonesia and Burma. And, conversely, one can and should speak of the "single mind" of the exploited Eastern and Western peoples fighting for freedom. The alliance formed by the reactionaries of all countries is opposed by the international alliance of revolutionaries.

No, it is not a question of what colonialism is "better". The question is that the time has come to abolish bourgeois colonialism once and for all, to put an end to the "civilising" mission of capitalism. That was demanded in the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to the Colonial Countries and Peoples*, submitted by the Soviet delegation to the Fifteenth General Assembly. This historic document is not communist "propaganda", but the expression by the Communists of the demand of our times, a slogan of all thinking and honest people. It is a realistic programme of their struggle and action, not just a beautiful Utopia. Utopias are not attacked as the Soviet Declaration is now attacked by the colonialists. Utopias do not evoke the reaction it has evoked all the world over.

The fiery voice of the nations smashing the chains of colonialism and imperialism is making itself heard in the big conference hall of the U.N. General Assembly. It is in this voice that new countries and whole continents have proclaimed their right to independent life.

Here it is, the voice of *Africa*, greeting the dawn of freedom after a century-long night of slavery. "The mainstream of history", President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana said, "is washing to the banks of reality one stubborn fact of life and human relations after another. One of the cardinal facts of our time is the great impact the awakening of Africa has on the contemporary world. . . . More than 200 millions of our people are raising a mighty voice, and what do we say? We do not demand death for our oppressors; we do not wish ill to those who owned us as slaves; we submit a just

and positive demand; our voice resounds across oceans and over mountains, hills and valleys, in the deserts and vast populated areas, and it demands freedom for Africa. Africa wants freedom, Africa must be free.

"It is a simple appeal, but it is also a red signal of warning to those who would ignore it.

"For years and years Africa suffered from colonialism and imperialism, exploitation and decline. In the North and South, East and West, its sons languished in the chains of slavery and humiliation, while the exploiters of Africa and the self-appointed masters of its destiny trampled our soil with incredible brutality, knowing not the meaning of mercy, shame and honour. Those days are gone, gone for ever, and today I, an African, stand before the lofty Assembly of the United Nations and, speaking in a voice of peace and freedom, proclaim the dawn of a new era for the whole world to hear."<sup>1</sup>

And here is the true voice of *Latin America* which is learning from Cuba how to fight for freedom. "The Cuban problem," Prime Minister Fidel Castro told the Fifteenth General Assembly, "is merely an example of what is going on in Latin America. How long must Latin America wait for its development? If one proceeds by the monopolies' criteria, it will obviously be on the Greek Calends. . . . The world is divided among monopoly groups. Who will dare deny this historical truth? The monopolies are not in the least interested in the development of nations. . . . We have read President Eisenhower's speech and we have not found it to contain any real proposals for disarmament, for the development of the underdeveloped countries or for the solution of the colonial problem. And yet the citizens of this country [U.S.A.], who are fed so much lying propaganda, would do well to devote some time to an objective study and comparison of the speeches made by the U.S. President and the Soviet Prime Minister and see which of them shows sincere concern for world problems. . . . The United States cannot be with the Algerian people because it is an ally of the metropolitan country; it cannot be with the Congolese people because it is an ally of Belgium; it cannot be with the Spanish people

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, September 25, 1960.

because it is an ally of Franco. The United States cannot be with the Puerto Ricans because for many years it has been destroying their distinguishing and unique character; it cannot be with the Panamanians or with the Philippine people or with peasants who want land because it is an ally of the big landowners. It cannot be with the colonies which aspire to freedom because it is an ally of the colonialists. . . . We proclaim that the peoples have the right to sovereignty and national existence." Before America and the whole world, Castro went on, Cuba was declaring that "the peasants have a right to land, the workers—to the fruits of their labour, the children—to education, the students—to free tuition, the Negroes—to freedom. . . . She proclaims the right of states to nationalise international monopolies and to redeem national wealth; the right of countries . . . to convert fortresses into schools and to arm their workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, Negroes and Indians, the oppressed and the exploited, so that they can defend their lawful rights."<sup>1</sup>

And here is the voice of *Asia*, which is building a new free world, a world without oppression, wars and poverty. "It is now clear that all the basic problems facing our world are interconnected," Indonesian President Sukarno told the General Assembly. "Colonialism is linked with security; security is linked with the problem of peace and disarmament; disarmament is linked with the peaceful progress of the developing countries. . . . We are all living at a time when states rise and empires crumble. . . . This process is inevitable and indisputable. At times it is inevitable and slow as molten lava flowing down the slopes of an Indonesian volcano; at times it is inevitable and rapid as a torrent which has broken through a rotten dam. But slow or fast, victory in the national struggle is inevitable and indisputable. . . . When this drive for freedom is everywhere completed, our world will be a better place than it is now, cleaner and much healthier. . . . We must fight not only for ourselves, but for all mankind and even for those we are fighting."<sup>2</sup>

Yes, times have changed. The abolition of the colonial system, which is a disgrace for humanity, is quite feasible

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, September 29, 1960.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, October 5, 1960.

in our day. It is a fact that the ideas of the *Soviet Declaration on the Granting of Independence to the Colonial Countries and Peoples* became the ideas of the *U.N. Declaration on the Granting of Independence to the Colonial Countries and Peoples*, adopted by an overwhelming majority on December 14, 1960. Had it been possible for the nineteenth-century colonialists to come to life again and attend the Fifteenth General Assembly, hear its participants, see how miserable their successors looked when left in shameful isolation,<sup>1</sup> and take a look at the world map of today, they would have indeed thought that—to quote Kipling—Earth and Sky were standing “at God’s great Judgment Seat”.

### **The Political Import of the Nationalism “Theory”**

To sum up. Kohn’s “theory” of nationalism negates the objective laws of historical development and substitutes the national for the social, although, in the final count, this substitution has a very definite social import: in opposing West to East, the Professor seeks to make a case for his theory that the capitalist system is indestructible and eternal. No one will of course deny the role of “nationalism”, or rather that of national movements, in contemporary history. They were a factor of progress in certain circumstances when the nations of the bourgeois West were consolidating themselves, and they are still a factor of progress in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East breaking out of the imperialist yoke in our day.

But, first, national movements in themselves do not explain the general laws or the complexity of historical development. These movements (as the religious movements of the past) have a social basis all their own and deeper roots.

Second, reference to the socio-economic roots of national movements shows that there was and is no special “Western”

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<sup>1</sup> Nine countries—the United States, Britain, France, Belgium, Australia, Spain, Portugal, South Africa and the Dominican Republic—“abstained” from voting for the U.N. Declaration. It was by no means an accident that such old colonial powers as Britain, Spain and Belgium found themselves in the same company with the United States.



or "Eastern" way. There was (with a vast diversity of tempos and forms) a movement in one and the same direction, in accordance with the general objective laws governing the development of socio-economic formations: from feudalism to capitalism, from capitalism to socialism. It is needless to prove to anyone in this age of liberation of Asia, Africa and Latin America that the ultimate aim of any national movement is to solve social tasks.

Third, we need only look at things from the angle of concrete socio-economic laws to see two nations instead of a single "nation" and two national traditions instead of a single "mind" in any antagonistic society, be it in West or East. In both, the exploiting class and its "national" tradition of exploiting its own and other peoples are opposed to the oppressed class and its genuine national tradition of fighting for the liberation of its own and other peoples from social bondage of every form. That is what Lenin meant when he said that "in all really serious and profound political issues sides are taken according to classes, not nations".<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, the national tradition of any one country does not remain invariable all through its history. It depends on the class which rules the country and directs its policy, and on the way the interests of this class alter.

These truths are so indisputable and so obvious that they are admitted in one way or another even by such a champion of nationalism as Prof. Kohn. In the Preface to his *Nationalism. Its Meaning and History*, he writes unambiguously that nationalism is a "historical phenomenon" determined "by the political ideas and the social structure of the various lands where it takes root". The Preface to Kohn's main work *The Idea of Nationalism* also unequivocally speaks of the dependence of nationalism on "other factors": "industrialism", social and political structure. But since his prefaces and introductions do not go beyond general platitudes and the influence exerted on nationalism by "other factors" is not amplified upon farther on, nationalism in Kohn's interpretation remains the main motive force of history. It is, he says, "a phenomenon, in which all the problems of recent history and of the contemporary world are

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 36.

focussed".<sup>1</sup> Nationalism, moreover, remains a self-sufficient historical force, determined by itself and identified now with some special "state of mind", now with an "act of consciousness" and now again with some mystical "idée-force". Kohn writes: "Although objective factors are of great importance for the formation of nationalities, the most essential element is a living and active corporate will."<sup>2</sup> Lastly, the most "meaningful" of Kohn's definitions of nationalism are bereft of all meaning. "Nationalism," he concludes, "is an idea, an idée-force, which fills man's brain and heart with new thoughts and new sentiments, and drives him to translate his consciousness into deeds of organised action."<sup>3</sup>

Having eliminated all concrete historical, class content from his idealistic definition of nationalism, Kohn has acquired the possibility of using the term "nationalism" as he sees fit. When it is a question of the "Eastern mind", he identifies it for ever with the reactionary policies of the feudal regimes or autocratic Pan-Slavism. And, conversely, when it is a question of the "Western mind", the factor of the relative progressive nature of early bourgeois nationalism is attributed to all countries and periods. The whole of Kohn's so-called methodology is reduced to this very simple mechanics.

*There were two Wests and two Easts*—this is a fact which Kohn has been consistently and systematically concealing in his latter-day works.

It is a matter of general knowledge, however, that this century's democratic and socialist revolutions have put an end to the reactionary policies of the "despotic regimes of the East". It is also well known that the progressive nature of Western bourgeois nationalism was both relative and short-lived. Even in its revolutionary youth the American bourgeoisie, after it had secured certain democratic rights for the "white race", rejected Jefferson's attempts to free millions of "black" slaves. Robespierre was forced to fight the bourgeois attempts to turn the liberation wars of the French Republic into wars of aggrandisement. Some ten or fifteen years later the reactionary trend towards aggrandisement pre-

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, p. IX.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Nationalism. Its Meaning and History*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, p. 19.

vailed in Napoleon's wars. One must really be utterly shameless to speak of the progressive nature of contemporary "liberal" capitalism, to seek to prove that the "sun" of "Western imperialism" has brought "lasting benefits" to the peoples of the East, that it is largely through "Western influence" that disparity between Eastern and Western countries is "diminishing", and that "it has been on the whole a period of which the West and especially Great Britain has no need to be ashamed" (sic!). But that is not all. The West, Kohn exclaims, "suffers from an unnecessarily bad conscience" and this may prompt it "to make disproportionate atonement for imaginary wrongs".<sup>1</sup>

When one reads that the West "suffers from an unnecessarily bad conscience" and hears Kohn's assertion that it has "no need to be ashamed", one recalls the strangely similar arguments of the creators of nazi Germany, their claim that conscience was a "chimera" which humiliated man and from which man "should free" himself.

Incidentally, Kohn is wasting his time worrying about the "bad conscience" of the imperialist West. This West does not even think of making good the losses it has inflicted on the colonial nations. It continues to spend money on the arms drive and encourages colonial fascists in an attempt to quash the liberation movement and save colonialism from its inevitable collapse. It is to justify this "sacred" cause that Kohn has written his latest works which condemn the "unhealthy" Asian nationalism and try to persuade "backward" nations that they will benefit a great deal more by joining "supranational" organisations like NATO, SEATO and CENTO than by waging national liberation struggles.

### **What "Western" Capitalism Promises Mankind**

While advising the liberal West not to be "ashamed" and not to waste its efforts and resources to atone for the "imaginary wrongs" done the colonial peoples, Kohn recommends the Eastern nations striving to liberate themselves

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<sup>1</sup> See H. Kohn, *The Reflections on Colonialism*. See *The Idea of Colonialism*, pp. 10, 11.

from imperialist slavery (and even he realises that their liberation is inevitable) not to listen to "communist propaganda" and to take the Western path. The West, he affirms, has shown by its own example how to build a free society, eliminate social conflicts and overcome backwardness and poverty.

"What Marx had not expected, happened," he writes. "In the first half of the twentieth century Western society solved its most urgent problem which seemed insoluble in the nineteenth century. . . . In the advanced Western countries—in the United States, in Britain and Scandinavia, in the Low Countries and in the German Federal Republic—the worker lost his feeling of being a mere object of exploitation and gained the consciousness of being a co-master of his life and of his nation's destiny. Rarely has there been in history a more rapid and thorough change in status and economic well-being than that between the conditions of the Western working class around 1900 and those of half a century later. The Western socialist and labour parties recognised it and discarded Marxist ideology as obsolete, as manifestly being in complete discrepancy with the existing reality. . . . This revolt for which Marx and Lenin had hoped, did not happen. In its stead, the proletarians were integrated and absorbed into Western society. In the 1950s none of the advanced countries in the Western community is threatened by class war or revolution."<sup>1</sup>

There is no denying, of course, that working-class living standards have changed in some highly developed capitalist countries. The worker no longer works between 12 and 15 hours as he did in Marx's day, but between seven and ten hours. In certain cases he is paid a temporary allowance if unemployed, social insurance if incapacitated, a pension if he has worked for the capitalist for several decades.

First, this is not a gift. It is a gain which has cost the working class a great deal of sacrifice and effort. The past century in the history of "exemplary" Western democracies is full of conflicts, strikes and armed clashes, and isn't the "integration" lauded by the Professor a non-stop war, sometimes bloodless and sometimes bloody? Who can say how

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *The Twentieth Century*, p. 225.

many more conflicts and clashes the Western working class will have to go through to uphold its gains?

Further. Although in some countries the working class has succeeded in winning, in stubborn struggle, a number of its pressing demands, the capitalist yoke has not disappeared. On the contrary, it is all the more unbearable now that capitalism has developed into state-monopoly capitalism. Having combined the power of the monopolies with that of the state, modern capitalism has immeasurably intensified the exploitation of the working class in a new way, above all through speed-up, and accelerated the impoverishment of the broad peasant masses.

The division of the Western bourgeois nations into two nations is as much a reality today as it was in Marx's time. Here, for instance, is what Britain's social structure looked like in the fifties of the twentieth (not nineteenth!) century, according to the same reformists who are for ever shouting from the house-tops that "obsolete" Marxist ideology is "manifestly being in complete discrepancy with the existing reality". The British Labour Party's manifesto *Towards Equality* says: "We are still 'two nations' economically as well as socially. Half the nation own little more than their personal and household effects: one per cent of the nation own something like half the nation's private wealth. Even this contrast does not fully illustrate the continuing concentration of wealth. Here is another illustration: a quarter of the nation's private wealth consists of large fortunes of £50,000 and over—and these are owned by one-fifth of one per cent of the nation."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, why have the millions of unemployed, who continue to burden the "flourishing" Western world, vanished from the Professor's field of vision? Can it be that these people have already become "co-masters" of their lives and of their nation's destiny? And where is the guarantee that this army of unemployed will not increase threefold and even fivefold tomorrow, that the above-mentioned "advanced countries" will not be hit by a catastrophe like the 1929-33 crisis? Isn't the factor of stability and security of social gains

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<sup>1</sup> *Towards Equality. Labour's Policy for Social Justice*. Published by the Labour Party, London, 1956, p. 19.

included in the concept of social progress, and where in Western society can one find stability and security today? "The organisation of the workers and their constantly growing resistance will possibly stem the *growth of misery* to a certain extent," the "obsolete" Engels foresaw back in 1891. "But the *insecurity of existence* will certainly grow."<sup>1</sup>

Second, capitalism is more than just "Western society", than the few countries enumerated by Kohn. It is the sum total of all social relations of this formation, of relations embracing the entire capitalist world. The capitalist West has been building up its wealth largely by ruthlessly exploiting the colonial and dependent countries and peoples, by exploiting their labour and natural riches. Capitalism is not only Britain which has for centuries been growing rich by plundering the colonies; it is also the plundered (now former) British colonies—India, Burma, Pakistan. It is not only the United States; it is also the poverty-ridden Latin American countries dominated by U.S. monopoly capital. While workers in Britain and the United States now live better than they did in the nineteenth century, this cannot be said of those on the "outskirts" of the Western world. The gap between poverty and wealth at these international poles is too great.

*In the colonies, former colonies and semi-colonies people live on an average from ten to twenty times worse and twice less than in the metropolitan countries—that is what largely keeps the "Western" world flourishing.*

Bourgeois literature, too, sometimes contains interesting admissions concerning the trend of development in the capitalist world *as a whole* in the past fifty years. Take Dr. T. Balogh, the British economist, for instance. "It is problematic," he writes, "whether total real production per head outside the Soviet orbit in 1950 was higher than in 1913 or even 1900. Furthermore, far from abating, this tendency seems to have been accelerated by the Second World War. Food production has lagged in most undeveloped areas far behind the increase in population. The gloomy predictions of Marx that the rich would become richer while the poor would suffer even greater hardship has unfortunately become vindicated on an international scale."

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<sup>1</sup> See K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Moscow, p. 54.

This international redistribution of poverty and wealth, which is especially typical of the twentieth-century capitalist system, explains to no little extent why it is from the East that the peoples of the world are advancing towards socialism in our age. Drawing up, in 1917, the programme for the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) the "obsolete" Lenin wrote: "It would be expedient, perhaps, to emphasise more strongly and to express more vividly in our programme the prominence of the handful of the richest imperialist countries which prosper parasitically by robbing colonies and weaker nations. This is an extremely important feature of imperialism. To a certain extent it facilitates the rise of powerful revolutionary movements in countries that are subjected to imperialist plunder, and are in danger of being crushed and partitioned by the giant imperialists (such as Russia), and on the other hand, tends to a certain extent to prevent the rise of profound revolutionary movements in the countries that plunder, by imperialist methods, many colonies and foreign lands, and thus make a very large (comparatively) portion of their population *participants* in the division of the imperialist loot."<sup>1</sup>

Third, can one speak of the capitalist world without taking into account the militarism and the imperialist wars it engenders? The Kohns hypocritically claim that capitalism is arming only because it is confronted by "aggressive" socialism. But history has proved that *the system of exploitation of man by man is inseparable from the system of extermination of man by man, that these are two sides of one and the same capitalist system*. Capitalism inevitably engenders wars. It has time and again proved its militaristic nature—both before there were any socialist countries in the world and in the past forty-odd years. It is the "Western" society glorified by Kohn which unleashed, in addition to innumerable small wars, the two world wars that devastated dozens of countries and cost mankind more than 50,000,000 in killed and about 100,000,000 in wounded. It is this "Western" society which launched the frenzied nuclear arms race, using man's genius to create monstrous weapons of annihilation.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 168-69.

In the first ten years after the inception of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which Kohn publicises as a prototype of the future supranational community, its members spent almost \$600,000 million on war preparations. That is more than forty (!) times the amount allocated by India for her five-year plan of peaceful construction in 1955-60—the sum was 62,000 million rupees, or about \$13,000 million.<sup>1</sup> The money wasted by the imperialists on the arms drive could, in other social conditions, put an end to poverty in all the underdeveloped countries of the world and turn them into flourishing, developed countries.<sup>2</sup> But this huge sum has not been simply thrown out. It has been spent on the kind of weapons which can at any time blow up all the cultural values accumulated by mankind, devastate whole continents and annihilate hundreds of millions of people!

That is *what* Kohn's "Western" capitalism promises mankind and *where* it is leading mankind to. Kohn takes a few Western countries and not the whole capitalist world. In these countries he studies certain periods and not the whole history of their development, takes into consideration certain sections of the population and not the whole of it. The new forms of exploitation adopted by monopoly capital, the crises of yesterday and the recessions of today, the millions of jobless and partially employed—all that does not count. World wars and militarism are insignificant details. The danger of nuclear catastrophe is nothing. What we are asked to believe is that Marx is obsolete, class struggle is gone with the wind, the "integrated" worker is happy, the West is flourishing—so learn from it how to build your life. And the brothers of the Western "integrated" worker were killed in the imperialist war. He himself spent his youth in the trenches and it took him years to clamber out of post-war dislocation and poverty. He lives in constant fear of losing his job. One-third of the wealth he creates goes to the monopolists and another third is squandered by his employers on the arms drive that

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<sup>1</sup> See *Indian Economics Yearbook*, 1957-58.

<sup>2</sup> "Afro-Asian economists believe that 10 per cent of the sum spent for military purposes by the Great Powers would eliminate poverty, disease and illiteracy in the whole world within 20 years," K. D. Malaviya, prominent Indian social leader, wrote in *Pravda* (October 20, 1960).



brings them profit. His fate is in the hands of madmen armed with hydrogen bombs, his home and his city can be turned into ashes at any moment, and he, the "integrated" worker, is threatened not merely with absolute impoverishment, as Marx once wrote, *but with absolute extermination*. And all this while the Kohns clamour about the blessings of liberal bourgeois "progress"!

"If the plague could distribute offices, dignities, honours and pensions," Abbé de Mably wrote in the eighteenth century, "it would soon have its theologians and legal advisers proving its divinity and saying that it is a sin to oppose its ravages."<sup>1</sup>

If one judges it by the scope of the peril it offers mankind, present-day imperialism is a plague. But while the plague had no champions, imperialism has more than enough of them. This is why it has already claimed more victims than the medieval plague. This too is why people will have to exert incomparably more effort to fight it than they did fighting the plague.

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<sup>1</sup> *Collection complète des oeuvres de l'Abbé de Mably*, Vol. 11, Paris, p. 301.

## Chapter II

### HANS KOHN'S STUDIES IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

#### Westernisers and Slavophiles

We shall now proceed from Hans Kohn's "theory" of nationalism to his concrete studies in Russian history. Incidentally, to attribute these studies wholly to Kohn is to stretch things a bit too far—the Professor merely copies what has been said in dozens of other books. But that makes it all the more necessary to analyse them.

Russia owed her progress, he claims, to "Western influence". Consequently, her main political forces were the Westernisers and the Slavophiles. The proponents of the Western line were Chaadayev, Belinsky, Herzen, Solovyov, Fedotov, certain tsarist ministers like Speransky and Witte, and—in the twentieth century—the Cadet (Constitutional-Democratic) and Menshevik parties. This line, he says, was opposed by the exponents of the Russian "mind", by the Slavophiles, from Pogodin and Dostoyevsky to Lenin. The Slavophiles allegedly taught that East was superior to the "decadent West" and propagated Russian Pan-Slavism and Messianism with the aid of Christian religious or socialist slogans. The outcome of the struggle between these two trends, the Professor would have one believe, depended on diverse attendant circumstances. As change would have it, the Russian throne was occupied by stupid tsars who refused, despite their good intentions, to take "the necessary steps for her [Russia's] overdue modernisation and reformation as a member of the European Community".<sup>1</sup> Among the people surrounding the stupid tsars there were few "pro-Western"

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 16.

liberals like Speransky and a great many intolerant and bigoted bureaucrats like Arakcheyev and Pobedonostsev who "had no doubt about the moral and practical evil of all modern Western institutions".<sup>1</sup> The spirit of "violence" and "lawlessness" cultivated by the obtuse bureaucrats engendered "intolerance" among the Russian intelligentsia. It simply failed to grasp the advantages of "moderate English criticism" and sank into mystic adoration of all sorts of extremist measures. And this was why the Russian revolutionaries, clinging to "Eastern traditions", pursued the same policy as their enemies.

The Professor, it is true, sees a ray of progress at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, following the emergence of the Russian "middle class" (that is, the bourgeoisie) and the foundation of the Cadet Party. But scarcely had Milyukov begun to persuade Nicholas II and his consort to transform "autocracy into a regime of liberty under law" when the same historical contingency intervened—this time in the form of world war. The "chaos" it created was taken advantage of by the "enemy" of the West, Lenin, whom the German generals—again through stupidity and "short-sightedness"—let through to Russia. Taking advantage of the fact that the masses knew nothing of "Western values", Lenin shoved the "Westernisers"—the liberals and the Mensheviks—into the background and seized power. Russia was returned from the "St. Petersburg" period into the anti-Western "Moscow" period, and the transfer of the capital to Moscow spelled finis to the country's modern history. Nevertheless, Kohn remains an "optimist". He believes that those same "Western influences" will yet rectify the errors of history and will bring victory to "Western freedom" in its struggle against "Russian traditionalism".

It is not difficult to see that Kohn's "conception" of Russia's historical development fully conforms to Kohn's "theory" of nationalism. There is only one thing missing in it: it does not conform to the facts of Russian history. Or, to be more exact, the Professor turns the facts upside-down. Let us first deal with the struggle between the Westernisers and the Slavophiles.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 48.

There is not a single work by bourgeois historians which does not proclaim this struggle the "key" to understanding the whole of modern Russian history. And every historian, naturally, quotes dozens of sources to prove that the question of "East" or "West" has always been the "Great Divide" of the Russian nation.

Kohn tries to prove that too. The great debate between Russian Westernisers and Russian Slavophiles, which began in Moscow in the late 1830s, he writes, "the debate about Russia and the West, which went on throughout the nineteenth century, forms the background against which Russia in the middle of the twentieth century and her relationship to the West can be understood."<sup>1</sup> This discovery, his followers explain, is of vast importance both for the students of Russian national history and those studying the history of other countries. "From New Delhi to Cairo, from Djakarta to Karachi and Nairobi," one of them writes, "men and women who have never read Marx, Lenin, or Stalin and who often abhor what they know of Russia, are in the grip of the same emotions and ideas which fan the as yet unfinished controversy between Westernisers and Slavophiles in Russia."<sup>2</sup>

But let us leave India and Egypt and return to Russia. Was there such a division of social forces if not in all then at least in some periods of Russian history? If not, why are the conceptions which have been repudiated by science being revived so consistently and persistently, and how is one to treat the facts cited by bourgeois historians?

Let us take the 1840s, the most "favourable" years for Kohn's conception. Here we indeed find a wide anti-feudal, enlightening movement uniting novelists, publicists and historians who held that it was possible and necessary for Russia to develop along "Western" lines and who were called "Westernisers". We could cite dozens of instances of Belinsky and Herzen joining forces with Granovsky, Kavelin and Botkin in opposing the "official populism" theory of the so-called journalist triumvirate (Grech, Bulgarin and Senkovsky).

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 14-15, VIII and others.

<sup>2</sup> V. M. Dean, *The Nature of the Non-Western World*, New York, 1957, p. 257.

Together, too, they opposed the Slavophiles, upheld the "natural school", etc. Herzen and Belinsky (and later Chernyshevsky) highly appreciated the lectures read by "Westerniser" Granovsky. Belinsky hailed Kavelin's article "Administration of Justice in Ancient Russia". The great critic had, on the whole, a high opinion of Botkin's literary works, notably his article about German literature, *Pisma ob Ispanii* (*Letters About Spain*), etc. With certain reservations, one can classify Milyutin, Zablotsky-Desyatovsky, Satin, Maikov (critic), Annenkov, Panayev, Goncharov, Turgenev, Grigorovich and many others as "Westernisers" and allies of Belinsky, Herzen and Ogaryov. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that in the 1840s "Westernisation" was opposed by the sufficiently clear-cut trend of the Slavophiles who associated themselves in much with the theoreticians of "official populism", upheld the theory concerning the singularity of Russian history, and tried to veer Russia off the "Western path".

Like other bourgeois authors, Kohn skims over the developments—he does not delve into them and does not pose any additional questions. He does not ask why it is this form that the polemic on the basic social issues assumed in the 1840s. Nor what social forces were behind the slogans then advanced. Nor still how they concretely interpreted the "Western" and "independent" path.

It is well known that no profound social tendency ever emerges all at once, that is, in its "complete", "pure" form. It is by far not all at once that its essence manifests itself in fully adequate ideological and political form. As this tendency develops, the more extrinsic forms are sort of discarded and the more necessary ones are found, the forms that are remote from the content are replaced by those closer to it, all this depending directly on the sharpness of social contradictions. The "younger" the tendency, the harder it is to "discern" it. But the science of history does not skim over the developments. It delves deep into them and discovers the fundamental below the superficial, the permanent below the temporary, the decisive below the secondary. This science is called historical because it can appraise developments not only by what they seem to be at their inception but by what they will be, by their tendencies and results, which objectively "elucidate" the meaning of what is going on—a thing very

often not grasped by those directly involved in the developments.

And yet, if we take the essence, and not the form, of the social struggle of those years, it will not be difficult to single out the main, decisive problem: on this score one could quote dozens of testimonies by the "Westernisers" of the 1840s and 1850s. "It may be said that the whole *Russian question*, at least now, boils down to serfdom," Herzen wrote.<sup>1</sup> "In my opinion," Turgenev seconded him, "this enemy had a definite form and a well-known name: this enemy was serfdom. Under this name I amassed and concentrated everything I had decided to fight against to the last, everything I had sworn never to reconcile myself with. . . . This was my Hannibal's oath, and I was not the only one who made it then."<sup>2</sup>

Actually, the polemic about the "independent" path was brought to the fore of the social struggle for a very simple reason: after the suppression of the Decembrist revolt there could be no open discussion about radical changes in Russia's social system, about the abolition of serfdom. There was only one possible legal way of posing and solving the question of abolishing serfdom and overthrowing autocracy: discussion of the good and bad sides of the West and their comparison with the Russian. The objective grounds for such a discussion were not wanting—the West was ahead of Russia in social and political development and had in many respects done away with feudalism. Russia still had to go through the stage the West had passed. It was a case of the more developed European countries showing the less developed Russia a picture of her own future. Objectively, the Western path was a synonym of the bourgeois path. But when Russians spoke of the West in those days, they had their own country in mind. The polemic with the Slavophiles, whose theory was very much like the theory of "official populism", allowed them at the same time to hit at the official ideology of Russian autocracy.

The debate "as usual had to confine itself to the literary, aesthetic, philosophical and even archaeological spheres and pretend—incidentally, without deceiving anybody—that it was

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<sup>1</sup> A. I. Herzen, *Sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. XII, Moscow, 1957, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> I. S. Turgenev, *Sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. X, Moscow, 1956, p. 261.

an innocent discussion between two different kinds of one and the same Russian patriotism and sometimes even an idle quarrel between two school parties", Annenkov wrote in his memoirs. "Actually, it was a question of elaborating moral and religious dogmas for society and drawing up a political programme for the future development of the state."<sup>1</sup>

A closer scrutiny of the single trend of the "Westernisers" in those years will reveal something else. It was "single" only in one respect: in the recognition of the need to abolish the system existing then in Russia. As far as the ways of engineering the revolt and its content were concerned, here there were profound differences even then.

Prof. Kohn naturally does not care about such "trifles" as the debate among the "Westernisers" of the 1840s about Robespierre, the "bourgeoisie" and socialism, although this debate gives a much clearer picture of Russia's historical development and the alignment of her social forces than the celebrated "East" or "West" dilemma. The "Westernisers" Belinsky and Herzen dreamed of their own 1789 and the "Westernisers" Granovsky and Kavelin of how to avoid it. "There is nothing to explain here," Belinsky wrote about the Jacobin dictatorship. "It is clear that Robespierre was no bigot, intriguer, villain or rhetorician, and that an eternal heaven on earth will not be built by the ideal and noble Gironde with honeyed and inspiring verbalisms but by terrorists with the double-edged sword of word and action of the Robespierres and the Saint-Justs."<sup>2</sup> And it was against the Robespierres and the Saint-Justs and in defence of the "honeyed and inspiring verbalisms of the ideal and noble Gironde" that Granovsky came out then. Here is what he wrote to Belinsky: "Robespierre was a mean little man, the tool and instrument of others' will. . . . The Gironde was greater. . . . The Gironde posed and elaborated all the problems Europe is pondering over now."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. V. Annenkov, *Literaturniye vospominaniya* (Literary Reminiscences), St. Petersburg, 1909, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> V. G. Belinsky, *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. XII, Moscow, 1956, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> T. N. Granovsky i yego perepiska (T. N. Granovsky and His Correspondence), Vol. II, Moscow, 1897, pp. 439-40. In his dispute Belinsky was supported by Herzen. "I agree with you completely,"

But it was not only a question of differences regarding the means and ways of engineering a revolt. It was one of differences in understanding its content. The Western bourgeois world had by then revealed its contradictions, and the "rule of capital" had already disgraced Europe. That is why Belinsky and Herzen wanted to build socialism (their socialism was Utopian) on the ruins of autocracy instead of reproducing the realm of bourgeois liberalism along the "Western pattern".

By the mid-1840s the debate and the differences among the Westernisers affected literally all the aspects of their world outlook. Belinsky's "friends" were constantly protesting against the critic's "intolerance" (this is what the liberals of the 1840s called his principled and consistent defence of his ideas). Belinsky differed with Botkin over the philosophy of Comte, and Ogaryov and Herzen differed with Granovsky over materialism. Herzen and Ogaryov finally quarreled with Granovsky; he refused to admit that "the development of science and its present state *oblige us* to accept certain truths whether we want it or not. . ." (the reference is to materialism and disbelief in God and in the immortality of the soul).<sup>1</sup> There were also irreconcilable differences between Belinsky and Botkin over art (suffice it to recall their different appraisals of Grigorovich's *Anton Goremyka*—*Anton the Unfortunate*—and of the theories of Rötcher, the German aesthete, or their debate on whether or not *Sovremennik*—*The Contemporary*—should publish Ogaryov's book of verse, *Monologues*, because of its Hamlet mood, etc.). It was not for nothing that Belinsky wrote his "friend": "It looks as though you and I sit at opposite ends."<sup>2</sup> In those years, Belinsky opposed not only the "fantastic populism" of the Slavophiles and the official ideologists of tsarism but the "fantastic cosmopolitanism" of certain liberals like Maikov, who wanted to "divide the popular and the human into two

he wrote. "Maximillian [Robespierre] was the only really great man in the revolution; the rest were the inevitable flashes in the pan and nothing more." See *Literaturnoye Nasledstvo* (*Literary Heritage*), Vol. 56, Moscow, 1950, p. 80.

<sup>1</sup> A. I. Herzen, *Sobraniye sochinenii* (*Collected Works*), Vol. IX, Moscow, 1956, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> V. G. Belinsky, *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii* (*Collected Works*), Vol. XII, p. 445.



elements that are absolutely alien and even hostile to each other".<sup>1</sup>

But the contradictions which in the 1840s divided the revolutionary-democratic and liberal tendencies in "pro-Western", or, to be more exact, anti-feudal, social philosophy, became especially profound and obvious when Belinsky began to work in *Sovremennik* (1846-47) and during the discussion of Herzen's celebrated *Pisma iz Avenue Marigny* (*Letters from Avenue Marigny*) (1847-48).

Belinsky's long-cherished dream of leaving Krayevsky and working for his own journal and being complete master of its policy came true in 1846-47. The journal was *Sovremennik*, which was taken over by Panayev and Nekrasov. The next thing was to rally round it all the anti-serf elements, and these were Granovsky, Kavelin, Botkin, Kudryavtsev, Annenkov and others. It was chiefly from among them that "contributors and accomplices" could be recruited. And Belinsky did just that. But while it had been relatively easy to leave Krayevsky, it was incomparably more difficult to win over the former allies from the "pro-Western" camp.

Many of them were too happy to be rid of the "intolerance" of "unrestrained Vissarion", as Belinsky was called. The contradictions which had been accumulating for years acquired an opportunity to manifest themselves in an organised manner, as it were. Although the real split came only ten years later, when Turgenev and others resigned from *Sovremennik*, it nevertheless presaged it. Granovsky, Kavelin and Botkin organised a kind of sabotage of the measures undertaken by the new editorial board of *Sovremennik*, a "plot" to push through their own independent line.

And how did Belinsky behave towards his friends in Moscow in those years? He had only one name for them: "Our friends and enemies from Moscow."<sup>2</sup> "Our Moscow friends treat us as though they were our enemies and are spoiling everything," he wrote Botkin with indignation. "To hear them, we have a common cause, thoughts, aspirations

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<sup>1</sup> V. G. Belinsky, *Izbranniye filosofskiye sochineniya* (Selected Philosophical Works), Vol. II, 1948, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> V. G. Belinsky, *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. XII, Moscow, 1956, p. 414.

and sympathies, it is all we, we, we, a lot of fine words.... I do not believe in this all-embracing love which extends equally to all and does not distinguish friends from foes, the near ones from strangers (the "Muscovites" claimed they were equally devoted to *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* [*Fatherland Notes*] and to *Sovremennik-Authors*).... It looks as though Kavelin and Granovsky have agreed to ruin *Sovremennik*."<sup>1</sup>

What was the result of all these contradictions, at that time still largely invisible? Botkin, Kavelin, Granovsky, Galakhov and Kudryavtsev, these "enemies" and "friends", agreed to contribute to *Sovremennik* without ceasing to contribute to *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*. This was expressive of the original situation which arose when contradictions intensified on an unprecedented scale and yet did not bring about a complete split.

But while Belinsky's association with *Sovremennik* summed up the growing contradictions among the "Westernisers" organisationally, as it were, the discussion of Herzen's *Letters from Avenue Marigny* summed them up theoretically.

The main debate here was between Botkin, Granovsky, Kavelin, Korsh and the others, who lauded the bourgeoisie, and Herzen and Belinsky, who sharply criticised it. Special stress should be laid on Belinsky's stand, which he briefly described as follows in his comment on Herzen's *Letters*: "There is much that is true... but also much I do not agree with." He agreed with Herzen that "capitalist rule has for ever disgraced modern France" and exclaimed, "Woe be to the state in the hands of the capitalists!" But, first, he knew that "the bourgeoisie does not appear of itself, it is the creation of history", that "it has a great past and has done a great service to mankind". Second, he distinguished between "the battling bourgeoisie and the triumphant bourgeoisie". And, third, he believed that "the attack should be made on big capitalists and not the bourgeoisie in general".<sup>2</sup>

While Botkin exclaimed, "God grant that we should have a bourgeoisie" and Bakunin prayed, "God save Russia from the bourgeoisie", Belinsky realised that it was hardly likely that Russia would avoid capitalism. But, for him, capitalist

<sup>1</sup> V. G. Belinsky, *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. XII, pp. 406, 409, 417, 421 and others.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 447-49.

industry was "merely the last evil in capitalist rule, in its tyranny over labour". He left the final solution of the question open, but the way he posed it was brilliant: "I concede," he said, "that the question of the bourgeoisie is still a question, no one has solved it completely so far and no one will; it will be solved by history, that supreme judge of men."<sup>1</sup> It was on historical experience, Belinsky said, that the final solution depended. The significance of the debate on the Western bourgeoisie in the history concerning "the division of liberalism and democracy" was all the greater because it took place virtually on the eve of 1848, the year which gave further evidence of the difference between the bourgeoisie fighting for power and the bourgeoisie which had triumphed.

In short, there were two different wings among the "united" Westernisers even in the 1840s. True, these two groups were still in the stage of embryo, but it was the embryo of the political forces, of the trends whose clash would subsequently exert a vast influence on the history of Russia. By their objective content, the views of Belinsky and Kavelin were bourgeois: the victory of their ideals would have brought about the victory of the capitalist mode of production. But they represented the interests of different classes—the peasants, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisified landowners and the nascent bourgeoisie, on the other—and advocated two different paths for the future bourgeois transformation of Russia.

We can of course cite many instances of the democrats and liberals of the 1840s waging joint struggles and taking joint political action. There is no denying that revolutionary democrats displayed certain liberal vacillations and that liberals had elements of democratism (and sometimes considerable), but one cannot help seeing the differences, the contradictions among the ideologists of various social forces temporarily allied by the idea that it was necessary to abolish serfdom, become visible, grow increasingly clear and take on different hues. The polemic originally went on covertly, mainly in letters; the debates were for a time confined to circles; the facts of contradiction, at first kept out of light by the facts of alliance and unity—all this gradually rose to the sur-

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<sup>1</sup> V. G. Belinsky, *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii*, (Collected Works), Vol. XII, pp. 447, 452.

face and evoked a public reaction. Behind all sorts of extrinsic strata one could discern ever more clearly two lines: peasant-democratic and landowner-liberal.

As for the Slavophiles of the 1840s, it is not enough to call them "antipodes" to the Westernisers and say they believed that the West was "decaying", and leave it at that. Slavophilism, imbued with religious-mystic notions and ideas concerning the "independence" of the Russian path, represented the interests of the conservative wing of landowning liberals and had its place between the old feudal Russia and the nascent anti-feudal camp. It was close not only to the theory of "official populism" (of which Kohn speaks) but also to "pro-Western" liberalism (which he by-passes in silence), expressing the desire, common to all liberals, to abolish serfdom without resorting to a violent class struggle, that is, displaying a tendency to rapprochement with the feudal landowners. If one bears in mind that the Slavophiles held that Russian history differed from the history of the West because, in their opinion, there had been "no struggle, no conquests, no eternal war" (that is, no class struggle) in Russia and that the liberal "Westernisers" were not at all enthusiastic about the French revolution, one will see that there were common traits in the ideologies of the liberal-progressive "Westernisers" and the liberal-conservative "Slavophiles" even in the 1840s.

These tendencies towards the unity of the "pro-Western" and "Slavophile" liberal elements, on the one hand, and towards the dissociation of pro-Western liberalism and democratism, on the other hand, became absolutely clearcut in the overt struggle of political trends at the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s. The democrats found themselves in the camp of fighting peasants, and the liberals, both the "Westernisers" and the "Slavophiles", became their opponents as soon as the seemingly abstract question—what path Russia should take—assumed concrete form: who was to free the peasants and how. In the 1840s the "Westernisers" Kavelin and Belinsky (despite all their profound differences) jointly opposed the Slavophiles and the apologists of the theory of official populism. In those years the gendarme lackey Bulgarian informed against both Belinsky and Kavelin. In the 1860s Kavelin, the mortal enemy of Chernyshevsky,

himself denounced "On Nihilism and Measures Against It" and hailed the suppression of the revolutionaries. "They were good," Chernyshevsky said of "the Botkins and their ilk" in 1857, "when Belinsky held them in hand and clever when he stuffed their heads with his ideas. They are washed-out now..."<sup>1</sup>

As the class struggle developed, Russian bourgeois and landowning liberals associated themselves more and more with serfism and autocracy, siding with the official camp against democracy, represented first by the *raznochintsy*<sup>2</sup> and later by the revolutionary proletariat and peasantry.

The terms "Westerniser" and "Slavophile" thus do not help at all to understand the Westernisation and Slavophilism of the 1840s, that is, of the years when these concepts came into existence. Incidentally, even the writers of the nineteenth century saw that they were narrow, artificial and nominal, that they did not express the substance of the struggle then going on. "The appellations given each other by the two parties in the form of such epithets as 'Moscow' and 'Petersburg' or 'Slavophile' or 'Western' are not very precise," Annenkov wrote. "Such imprecisions are inevitable when the dispute *has no real grounds of its own and is not conducted by the methods and with the words and arguments it requires.*"<sup>3</sup>

That was one hundred years ago and the "real grounds" of the ideological struggle waged then have long been discovered by historians. Nevertheless, Kohn continues, in spite of everything, to look for "Moscow" and "Petersburg" parties in Russia. Little wonder, then, that he gives a one-sided, distorted picture even of the 1840s, concealing contradictions among the Westernisers and by-passing in silence the tendency towards unity displayed by the liberal Westernisers and the liberal Slavophiles. As for the 1850s and 1860s, Kohn

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<sup>1</sup> N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. XIV, Moscow, 1949, p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> The *raznochintsy* (literally, men of various social-estates) were educated members of Russian society drawn from the small town-folk, the clergy, the merchant classes and the peasantry, as distinct from those drawn from the nobility.

<sup>3</sup> P. V. Annenkov, *Literaturniye vospominaniya* (Literary Reminiscences), p. 236 (italics ours—Authors).

himself destroys his scheme by segregating the representatives of "radical" Russia—Chernyshevsky and his followers—in a class by themselves. When one views later periods through the prism of Kohn's "abstractions", the last remnants of objectivity vanish altogether. Instead of an analysis of the real class-struggle processes what one finds in Kohn's "studies" is a selection of isolated and doctored pronouncements by Russian writers and political leaders whom he peremptorily divides into two camps: those "for" the West and those "against" the West. His camp of "Westernisers" includes both Belinsky and the Cadets, the materialist and socialist Herzen and the mystic Solovyov. And figuring among the "Slavophiles" are Tyutchev, Pobedonostsev, Dostoyevsky and Lenin. It matters little to him that Pobedonostsev stood for autocracy and repudiated "Western parliamentarism" and that the Bolsheviks did it because they stood for proletarian democracy. Kohn deems it enough to establish their negative attitude to the West to lump them in the same camp. Hadn't Dostoyevsky once written that the Russians should turn to Asia, for there they would find the strength and the allies to win Russia's fated struggle against the West? Kohn compares these words with his own misquotation of Lenin on the awakening of the Asian peoples and draws the following conclusion: "Lenin shared this conviction."<sup>1</sup> Hadn't Tsar Nicholas I's Third Gendarmerie Department held that the "happiness of His Majesty's subjects" required it "to know what was going on among the people, what were their thoughts, what they talked about, what occupied them"? Kohn finds this enough to draw another profound conclusion: "Lenin shared the convictions of Nicholas I."<sup>2</sup> Proofs? There are none, and how could there be if Leninism repudiates "tsarist customs" and police tutelage for the people both in theory and practice, and affirms something totally different from what Kohn claims. "Our idea," Lenin said, "is that a state is strong when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia*, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 256.

To those interested in modern Russia Kohn tries to palm off a book about the Russia of Nicholas I, written a hundred years ago by the Marquis de Custine. He illustrates Soviet national policy with examples from the tsar's conquests, the organisational principles and tactics of the Bolshevik Party with references to Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*, and the principles of the Soviet Union's foreign policy with Tyutchev's assertion that there can be no agreement between "East" and "West". All these studies of Kohn's are crowned by the following historical parallel borrowed from N. Berdayev: Moscow was and is the capital of Russia; the Soviet Government is "behind the hallowed walls of the Kremlin"; lastly, Moscow used to be called "Third Rome", and it was actually in Moscow that the Third International was established. Can the historical ties between the two Moscow periods be denied after that?

Lumping together opposing social movements, contraposing kindred movements, refusing to analyse the changes wrought in national traditions by the development of the class struggle—that is about all the methodological sapience of Kohn's studies amounts to, irrespective of whether he is dealing with "Eastern" or "Western" nationalism, with the history of Russia or that of any other country. The emptiness and subjectivism of the idealistic definition of nationalism allow him to do as he likes with history.

### **Kohn on Russian "Extremism". In the Footsteps of the Third Department**

Let us deal with the next thesis of the historical "conception" under review. Modern bourgeois literature has been unsparing of effort in identifying Leninism with Russian anarchism and Blanquism, or with so-called Russian extremism. Hans Kohn, naturally, reiterates this calumny. "The extremist theories of the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876) and of nihilist agitators who believed in violence in disregard of all accepted morality, such as Sergei Nechayev (1847-1882) and Pyotr Tkachev (1844-1882)," he proclaims, "influenced the beginning of the revolutionary movement and were later revived in Leninism."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 41.

We already know how Kohn has "proved" Lenin's assimilation of Blanquist tendencies in Russian philosophy. But Kohn's ellipses in Lenin's criticism of Blanquism is only one trait in the almost century-old campaign of slander against the Russian revolutionaries. It is important, therefore, to establish who started this campaign and when, whose traditions Kohn is continuing, and how his conjectures stand up to the facts of Russian history.

Let us first dwell on the favourite parallel in bourgeois literature, on that between Nechayev and the Bolsheviks. Its analysis perhaps shows best how the reactionary anti-communist press fabricates its stories about Russian "extremism", what sources the "Bolshevik experts" drew their information from.

Who was Nechayev? What had he to do with the Russian revolution and Leninism?

Nechayev became prominent during the student unrest in St. Petersburg at the end of 1868 and the beginning of 1869, in which he sought to play a leading role. When the tsarist authorities set out to hunt down dissident students in January 1869, Nechayev started a rumour going that he had been arrested, and then fled abroad. From there he sent the students of St. Petersburg University, the Medical Academy and the Technological Institute a special message, informing them that he had done something never done before in the history of tsarist prisons—that he had escaped "out of the frozen walls of the Peter and Paul Fortress". So did Nechayev begin to create a legend about himself allegedly to further the "revolutionary cause". Nechayevism strove to subordinate the revolutionary movement to the Jesuitic principle that "the end justifies the means", but this end—emancipation of the people—was from the very first replaced by another—glorification of Nechayev himself. And the means destined to prepare the revolution became the means of its disorganisation.

Nechayev planned to use the Russian revolutionary émigrés in Europe to advance his revolutionary career, and the blessings of Bakunin, Herzen and Ogaryov were to give him the halo he needed so much to assume "leadership" in Russia. And so he called on Bakunin and introduced himself as a representative of a big (really non-existent) Russian



revolutionary organisation. Bakunin gave the imposter a letter of credence certifying him as a "confidential representative" of the Russian Section of the fictitious International Revolutionary Union (the organisation uniting a handful of anarchists from the Bakuninist Alliance of Socialist Democracy). To give the two organisations a semblance of reality, the certificate issued to the "confidential representative" bore the number 2771. With Bakunin's help, Nechayev ingratiated himself with Ogaryov who dedicated to him the poem *Student*, originally written in memory of the democrat Astrakov.

While abroad, Nechayev amassed not only the mandates and "letters of recommendation" he needed but laid the "theoretical foundation" for his future activity in Russia. Together with Bakunin, he published a series of manifestoes, including "The Statement of the Revolutionary Question" and "The Principles of the Revolution", and the first issue of the *Narodnaya Rasprava* (*People's Retribution*) newssheet.<sup>1</sup> They dealt with Bakunin's invariable plan of "universal" destruction, of razing the state with its "educated scum", propagated the cult of ignorance ("he who learns the revolutionary profession from books will for ever be a revolutionary idler"), vilified Chernyshevsky and his friends (alleging that they "sat doing nothing" when the moment favoured a revolution), and recommended murder and brigandage as the most effective revolutionary means. "Revolution equally sanctions poison, the dagger, the noose, etc.," the authors of the manifestoes wrote. "And so the stage is set!"<sup>2</sup> The manifestoes were printed in Geneva but they came out with the words "Gedruckt in Russland" and "Imprimé en Russie" ("Printed in Russia") on them.

In Geneva, Nechayev and Bakunin also elaborated practical and organisational guiding principles of the future People's Retribution Society—the notorious *Catechism of the Revolutionary*. Leave out the few phrases about the imminent "people's revolution", "complete liberation" and the "happiness" of the people, and the *Catechism* becomes the quint-

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<sup>1</sup> See M. A. Bakunin, *Rechi i vozzvaniya* (*Speeches and Manifestoes*), 1906, pp. 235-51; *Istoriko-revolutsionnaya khrestomatiya* (*Historical Revolutionary Manual*), Vol. I, Moscow, 1923, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

essence of Nechayevism, this pseudo-revolutionary trend which brought the infamous Jesuitic principles into the liberation movement, this trend of militant ignorance which proposed to combat the loathsome old world with its own foul means.<sup>1</sup>

The authors of the *Catechism* divided the "rotten society" into several categories. Some were to be "summarily" sentenced to death, others given reprieve "only temporarily" so that they could "bring the people to the inevitable revolt by their brutalities", still others—"the highly placed animals"—it was proposed to deceive, discover their "dirty secrets" and then use "for diverse undertakings", yet still others—"ambitious government officials and liberals of different hues"—were to be "utterly" compromised and then used to "stir up trouble in the country". Lastly, it was proposed incessantly to push the conspirators and doctrinaires indulging in "idle discourse in the circles or on paper" into making brain-racking statements, "which will result in the complete disappearance of most and give a real revolutionary education to a few."<sup>2</sup>

Utter and unmitigated anti-democratism was practised behind the smoke-screen of appeals for "confidence in individuals". But here is what this confidence boiled down to: "Members should not ask the organiser any questions not connected with the activities of the circles subordinated to him.... Members' complete frankness with the organiser is indispensable for the success of the cause." And here is what was demanded of the "organiser" in his relations with the rank-and-file executors of a task: he should see to it that his subordinates "should know not the substance of the task but only . . . those parts of the task it has fallen to their lot to perform. To stimulate energy, it is necessary to explain the substance of the task in a wrong way".<sup>3</sup>

Finally, a number of paragraphs were devoted to the

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<sup>1</sup> The existence of the *Catechism* became known at Nechayev's trial. Marx and Engels reproduced it in the pamphlet *L'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste et l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs* (see Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 18, Berlin, 1962, pp. 426-32).

<sup>2</sup> M. A. Bakunin, *Rechi i vozzvaniya* (*Speeches and Manifestoes*), 1906, pp. 265-66.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259, 261.

revolutionary's "morality". All his "tender feelings" of kinship, friendship, love, gratitude and even integrity should be quashed. The revolutionary should ignore public order and sever all ties with the educated world, its laws, rules of propriety and morality. The revolutionary should know only one science—the science of extermination and destruction, this was what he lived for. To this end he should penetrate everywhere, pretend to be what he was not, study people day and night, resort to all means and methods.<sup>1</sup>

Nechayev began to implement the principles of the *Catechism* on his first visit abroad. Knowing that all letters to Russia went through the Third Department, he sent hundreds of compromising epistles to people of the "fourth category" with a view to "drawing" them into the revolutionary struggle.<sup>2</sup>

Nechayevism reached its apogee in the autumn of 1869, when the "representatives" of the World Union reappeared in Russia, armed with Bakunin's "mandate", the poem of the deceived Ogaryov and the *Catechism of the Revolutionary*, to organise "universal" and "ruthless" extermination and destruction. Building up the People's Retribution Society in accordance with the *Catechism*, Nechayev carried out dozens of well-planned provocations, naturally in furtherance of the "cause" and "in the general interest of the revolution". In Moscow, he told young people that there was a powerful revolutionary organisation in St. Petersburg and that they should follow its example. In St. Petersburg, he lauded the might of the Moscow organisation and urged the young people there not to lag behind the Muscovites. To impress upon the members of the People's Retribution Society that they were constantly in the focus of the all-seeing eye of the mythical committee and in its power, Nechayev made them spy upon one another, spoke of the "latest instructions" from abroad, passed off his men as inspectors of the "Committee", did spying on his own in disguise, indulged in extortion and blackmail.

His methods naturally aroused the suspicion of the revolu-

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<sup>1</sup> M. I. Bakunin, *Rechi i vozvzaniya*, pp. 262, 263.

<sup>2</sup> See R. M. Kantor, *V pogone za Nechayevym (In Pursuit of Nechayev)*, St. Petersburg, 1922, p. 6.

tionaries and then led to their resistance. In fact, he was opposed by Negreskul and Nathanson back in the days of student unrest in 1868-69.<sup>1</sup> Negreskul fought Nechayev when he was abroad and when he returned to Russia, telling everyone that he was "nothing but a swindler". Herzen protested against Nechayev's anarchist proclamations and predicted to Ogaryov that "they will cause a great deal of trouble". Opposition to Nechayev's activity spread to the People's Retribution Society, and one of its members, student Ivanov of the Petrovsky Academy, announced that he was resigning and establishing his own organisation.

This was where Nechayevism displayed its second face. We know the first—the all-penetrating, all-enmeshing lie. When there is a danger of its being exposed, there is only one way of preventing it: violence. Nechayev declared Ivanov a traitor who must be put away for the sake of "the Society and the cause". Nechayev hoped the murder would help restore his authority and "cement with blood" the members of People's Retribution. On November 21, 1869, Ivanov was lured into a grotto of the Academy's park, where Nechayev first tried to strangle him and then shot him.

And so the first and, generally speaking, only task carried out by Nechayev in accordance with the *Catechism* was the murder of a revolutionary. The first victim of terror was not from among the Arakcheyevs, not one of the "monsters in sparkling uniforms bespattered with people's blood", as the first issue of the newspaper *Narodnaya Rasprava* predicted, but a member of the organisation itself.

After that, the "representative" of the World Union again fled abroad, arriving in Geneva in January 1870. In the second issue of *Narodnaya Rasprava*, Nechayev tried to explain his flight from Russia and his murder of Ivanov. He wrote that he had again been "caught" by the tsar and had again succeeded in "escaping". He continued to sling mud at Ivanov, affirming that his assassination was the result of the "stern logic of the true champions of the cause". He published

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<sup>1</sup> See B. P. Kozmin, S. G. *Nechayev i yego protivniki*, "Revolutionnoye dvizheniye 1860kh godov". (S. G. *Nechayev and His Opponents*. "Revolutionary Movement in the 1860s", Moscow, 1932, pp. 204-16.

several fanciful appeals to the "urban muzhiks" and the "noble Russian gentry", and laid hands on the so-called Bakhmetyev fund which, after Herzen's death, had remained in his daughter's trust. Eventually, Nechayev's intrigues became too much even for Bakunin, the "apostle of universal destruction" and admirer of the underworld. Bakunin broke with Nechayev, and Nechayev left Bakunin together with some letters compromising the latter.

In Russia, the developments were taking their course. Reaction was reaping what Nechayev had sown. It did not take the authorities long to discover Ivanov's murder. About 300 persons were taken into custody, and 87 of them were haled to court.

The Nechayev trial was tsarism's first experiment of associating itself with the international ideological campaign against democracy, against communism, launched after the suppression of the Paris Commune. Prior to that, autocratic Russia's contribution to the cause of international reaction was made in the form of brute force, with the aid of bayonets. After the "great reforms" of the 1860s in addition to brute force, which to the last remained its main weapon in the struggle against the revolutionaries, tsarism began to resort more and more to the weapon of vilification. Backward tsarism was learning from the "advanced" European bourgeoisie to combat the revolution by discrediting the revolutionaries. The biggest service Nechayev rendered reaction was not only that he had actually helped to arrest and physically "disarm" a dozen or two of revolutionaries. It was that he gave the reactionaries a chance to proclaim his name a synonym of revolution, democracy and communism. Nechayev claimed he was a revolutionary. Consequently, every revolutionary was a Nechayevist. He acted in the name of the International Revolutionary Union. Ergo, he was a typical representative of the International Working Men's Association. He resorted to lies and murder. Therefore, such were the principles of socialism and communism.

The atmosphere in which the first public political trial in Russia was prepared and staged was brilliantly described by the Russian writer Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin in painting the portrait of Fedenka Krotikov, a pig-headed advocate of the struggle against the revolutionaries: "Then came the well-

known developments in Western Europe—the establishment of the International Working Men's Association, the Franco-Prussian War, the Paris Commune, etc., and he was deeply worried about it all.... Fedenka looked for the roots and threads, and was perturbed and vexed when he could not find them.... Poor man! He apparently followed the old routine and was ever looking for some facts which would give him a pretext to proclaim a crusade. He did not suspect that the system of facts had become obsolete, that an entirely different system was coming, and had in fact come, into existence, a system which made it possible to raise an alarm without any pretext and without the slightest fact and to wage war far and wide, striking fear into the heart of the dumbfounded man in the street.... And then, just when he was thinking that his end had come, Fedenka read the word 'struggle' in the newspapers.... News had come from Paray le Monial in France of the public renunciation of Satan and all his doings. After reading of this in the newspapers, Fedenka decided that it was necessary to start something of the kind in Navoznoye."<sup>1</sup>

The government and its agents did their best to draw public attention to the trial, and fully succeeded. No sooner had the reports about the "atrocities" of the Paris Commune disappeared from the pages of the reactionary press than the reader was acquainted with the circular sent by Jules Favre, the French Foreign Minister, on July 6, 1871, to all the governments of Europe (including the Russian), informing them that International "agents" were active in their countries. Reminding them of the Paris events, he urged the governments not to remain passive while preparations were being made to destroy the foundations of "civilisation". Two weeks or so later Russia was already reading a government report on the discovery of a plot to overthrow the government and on the forthcoming trial of the "criminals". To focus public attention on the hearings, the Ministry of Justice proposed that "detailed reports of the hearings be published without delay". Alexander II personally wrote "Godspeed!" on the report submitted by Essen, Administrative

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<sup>1</sup> N. Shchedrin (M. Y. Saltykov), *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. IX, Leningrad, 1934, pp. 187, 188, 196, 199.

Manager of the Ministry of Justice. Detailed stenographic reports (identical with those printed in *Pravitelstvenny Vestnik* [*Government Herald*]) of the St. Petersburg court hearings were published in almost all the newspapers in July and August 1871. "The Nechayev case was the theme of all talks and rumours last week," the newspaper *Golos* (*Voice*) commented. "Everyone, young and old, was interested in it... Everywhere we saw people avidly reading newspapers."<sup>1</sup>

The reactionaries' idea was extremely simple: to finish with all the revolutionary elements with one blow, to root out "Red sedition" in autocratic Russia just as thoroughly as the butcher Thiers had done it in republican France. Practically all the "state criminals" taken into custody by the Third Department in the eighteen months after Ivanov's murder appeared in the dock during the Nechayev trial. Among those indicted for the murder were not only Uspensky, Kuznetsov, Pryzhov and Nikolayev, but all the other members of the People's Retribution Society and even people who had absolutely nothing to do with the crime.

In a case of "such magnitude", Prosecutor Polovtsev declared, especially important was the role played by "precedents". The indictments proclaimed Nechayevism the logical result of the "false doctrines of communism and socialism" which had penetrated into Russia early in the 1860s. The traces of the plot went not only to Karakozov (whom Nechayev urged others to emulate) but to Chernyshevsky, not only to the Russian revolutionary émigrés in Europe (as was "proved" by Bakunin's mandates) but to the International Association.

It was noteworthy that along with the government reports on the "Nechayev case" and comment the reactionary newspapers published articles about France and detailed reports on the sessions of the Versailles Military Tribunal. While articles about the Communards mentioned Nechayev only occasionally, the articles about the Nechayevists constantly spoke of their "resemblance" to the Communards. "The aims they pursued were practically identical with those proclaimed by the Paris Commune," *Golos* wrote.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Golos* No. 197, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 183, 1871.

The prosecution tried to "squeeze" everything it could out of the Ivanov murder. "The attack on Ivanov and his subsequent death," the indictment said, "clearly show that the members of the Society recognise no method of eliminating imaginary or real obstacles to achieve their aims other than murder."<sup>1</sup>

Nechayev's *Catechism* did an excellent service to reaction too. Urging to "nip this so-called Russian revolution in the bud," *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* (Moscow Recorder) wrote: "You doff your hats to this Russian revolution, gentlemen. But here is the catechism of the Russian revolutionary.... Let us see what the Russian revolutionary thinks of himself. In all consciousness, he declares himself a man without faith, without rules, without honour. He is ready to commit any base act, forgery, fraud, robbery, murder and treachery.... Swindlers are better and more honest than the leaders of our nihilism.... And it is to these people that you entrust our poor students."<sup>2</sup>

This campaign of libel was joined by the Western press. The semi-official London *Times* claimed on October 11, 1871, that the International's responsibility for the Nechayev plot had been confirmed by the conspirators at the St. Petersburg trial. On October 21, *The Times* editorially depicted Nechayevism as a sort of national embodiment of the methods of world revolution in general and the International in particular. "The Russian programme," the paper said, "is in shape and plan the programme of all conspiracy.... We really have to thank these Russian revolutionists ... for ... showing, as they do, what is their (the conspiracies'—*Authors*) natural tendency and logical conclusion."<sup>3</sup>

The facts we have cited prove convincingly that what we have here is a deliberate campaign of vilification. *The priority in proclaiming Nechayevism a typical phenomenon belongs to the Russian gendarmes and venal English publicists, to tsarism and European reaction.* The farce staged by the Third Department with the tsar's blessing, the campaign launched by the international reactionary press—these are the historical

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravitelstvenny Vestnik* No. 156, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* No. 161, 1871.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, "Revolutionary Nihilism", October 21, 1871, p. 7.



"source" used by Kohn and other "independent" and "unbiased" historians of the "free West".

So far we have spoken of reaction's plan to make use of the Nechayev case. But drawing up a plan is one thing and implementing it is quite another.

Russian public opinion was confronted with a difficult test in 1871. It had to distinguish between rye and darnel, between real and distorted revolutionary principles and ideas. Nechayev demanded that people should develop their revolutionary character not in empty talk but in protesting activity, in struggle, and himself turned this activity into a farce by compelling the revolutionaries to indulge in mystification and trifles. He urged people to unite against despotism, "which has soiled itself by all sorts of vile measures", and at the same time regarded provocation and mutual espionage as an instrument promoting such unity. He protested against formal education as one corrupting young people, stigmatised the sophisms of the "clerical professors" who "embellished the chains fettering the Russian people with the flowers of ancient eloquence", and at the same time vented his hate on science in general and made a cult out of ignorance. He castigated the complacency with which the liberals milled the wind and criticised Utopias, and sought to smear the socialist ideas of Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky. He urged the revolutionaries to direct blind peasant revolts consciously and purposefully and himself preached revolution as mere negation and identified it with unbridled robber anarchy. There was nothing dearer to him than people, and at the same time he regarded them merely as "fodder for plots". He wanted to free society from the chains of despotism, to guarantee "complete freedom of the renovated individual", and himself created a Jesuitic organisation based on dictatorship and despotism, on the blind obedience of its members. He was a man with an iron will, but the harm his actions did was directly proportional to the persistence with which he carried them out.

Nechayevism was possible only in an autocratic country in which the revolutionary movement was immature. It embodied in their ugliest form some of the general shortcomings of that movement, which had lost its leaders in the 1860s, and especially its theoretical and organisational weak-

nesses, its divorcement from the masses. Nechayevism could not serve the revolution; it could only destroy it because Nechayev's pseudo-revolutionary phraseology concealed the counter-revolutionary substance of his "principles" and actions.<sup>1</sup>

What most of Nechayev's friends could not do in their time—distinguish the revolutionary truth from the Nechayev falsehood—was done in the very first days of the trial by the defence counsel and the progressive Russian press.

The hearings revealed that Nechayev had involved his friends in the murder of Ivanov against their will. Not one of the accused knew the content of *The Catechism of the Revolutionary*, none had read it. Nechayev's and Bakunin's other programmatic documents, known to the members of the People's Retribution Society, evoked no sympathy, and there were some who categorically refused to accept them.<sup>2</sup>

The trial revealed that Nechayev's amoral commandments and actions were absolutely contrary to the moral principles of Russia's revolutionary youth. As the defence sought to prove, it was the noble traits of the members of the organisation—their integrity, selflessness and readiness to serve the people—on the one hand, and Nechayev's speculation with the name of the people and the revolution, on the other hand, which explained his incomprehensible and almost mystic power over his comrades and their inability (barring Ivanov) to dissociate themselves from him. The tragedy of these people, who had put their lives and honour at the disposal of this rogue and adventurer, was that they really thought that in serving him they were serving the liberation

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<sup>1</sup> The fanatical hatred of tsarism Nechayev displayed in court and his heroic behaviour in the Alexeyevsky Ravelin dungeons, where he was kept, tortured and humiliated for more than ten years (he died in 1882), cannot alter this general appraisal of the objective role of Nechayevism. Incidentally, Nechayev remained true to the false principles of the *Catechism of the Revolutionary* to the very end. "He forgot nothing in the long years of his solitary confinement," Vera Zasulich wrote. "He forgot nothing and learned nothing. He remained convinced to the very end that mystification was the best, if not the only, means of forcing people to accomplish a revolution" (V. Zasulich, *Vospominaniya [Reminiscences]*, Moscow, 1931, p. 56. See also P. Y. Shchegolev, *Alexeyevsky Ravelin*, Moscow, 1929, pp. 188-374).

<sup>2</sup> See *Pravitel'stvenny Vestnik*, Nos. 158, 163, 165, 1871.

cause. Nechayev deftly speculated on these noble, sublime sentiments, turning his comrades into blind instruments to be used for his dirty and vile deeds.

"Wherever he appeared, this dreadful, ill-fated man brought infection, death, arrests and destruction in his wake," defence counsel Spasovich told the court. "You have heard student Yenisherlov, who went so far as to suspect him of being a detective. I am very far from sharing this suspicion, but I must say that if a detective were to set himself the task of catching as many people as possible, he would do no worse than follow Nechayev's example."<sup>1</sup> And defence counsel Sokolovsky said: "The defence lawyers who spoke before me have stripped Nechayev of his revolutionary halo."<sup>2</sup> This was the main achievement of the trial.

The trial did not justify the hopes set on it by the powers that be. It gradually turned into an indictment of the autocratic regime itself. It was not for nothing that within a week or so the presiding judge started to call the defence lawyers and the accused to order, forbidding them to speak about the "historical and political aspect of the case". Little by little, the newspapers substituted stenographic reports by brief summaries, and even these brief items appeared less and less.

That reaction's plans failed is also eloquently testified to by the reports of the tsarist informers and the reactionary press. Voicing alarm at what was going on at the hearings, one Third Department agent wrote in his report on July 11, 1871: "Frankly speaking, the roles are changing: society and the state represented by the court are not the accusers. They are becoming the accused, and they are being accused with the force and eloquence of fanatical conviction bordering on martyrdom. Such examples always create precedents."<sup>3</sup>

"How could the court and the Procurator's Office allow Spasovich, Arseniev and Prince Urusov to appear as defence in a political trial?" I. Arseniev complained in a report to the gendarmerie chief. "Spasovich clearly showed what he

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravitelstvenny Vestnik* No. 165, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 167, 1871.

<sup>3</sup> B. P. Kozmin, *Nechayev i Nechayevtsi* (Nechayev and Nechayevists), Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, p. 168.

was and what he stood for when he defended Louis Blanc's socialist theories in the Shchapov case. He was happy to be able to use the court-room to speak publicly of his political convictions and affiliations. . . . The court and the Procurator's Office . . . should have appointed a prosecutor capable of upholding the interests of the state."<sup>1</sup>

Reaction failed to achieve its aim—to discredit Russian and foreign revolutionaries. The trial did not drown the revolutionaries in Nechayev's mire. On the contrary, it cleansed them of it. The Nechayev case, concocted by the Third Department, played a revolutionising role despite the plans of its organisers.

We have before us the memoirs of A. Lukashevich, a Narodnik who then lived in Kherson. "We are being confronted by the first 'accursed questions' thanks to the abundance of material supplied to all the newspapers by *Pravitel'stvenny Vestnik*," he wrote. "...There is no possibility of properly appraising the effect made upon young minds by the denunciations which have unexpectedly overwhelmed us. . . . Facts unknown to us and the attempts to explain them literally made young people think. I have always considered these two facts—the Nechayev trial and the Paris Commune—the two visible landmarks which determined my whole path in life."<sup>2</sup>

And he is by far not the only person to think so. The Paris Commune and the Nechayev trial (despite all the difference in their import), as a rule, figure in the Narodniks' memoirs, letters, etc., among the main factors contributing to the growth of the revolutionary sentiment in Russia in the early 1870s. And, as a rule, all these sources speak of the "mixed" (or, rather, dual) impression the Nechayev trial made on the contemporaries: it evoked sympathy for the accused and their fight for the people's freedom and indignation at Nechayev and the methods he employed.

It took no time at all for the Russian progressives to unravel the tangle that was the Nechayev case. They realised

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 186-87. I. A. Arseniev should not be identified with defence lawyer K. K. Arseniev.

<sup>2</sup> A. Lukashevich, *V Narod! (Going to the People)*, *Byloye (Past)*, No. 3 (15), 1907, pp. 1-2, 5.

that Nechayevism and the revolution were mortal enemies, that deception could not be used as a principle in defence of an honest cause, that despotism was not a weapon to achieve freedom with, and that thoughtlessness was not a means of developing independent thinking. After the trial, the Russian revolutionaries' attitude to Nechayevism became utterly negative. Nechayev's "organisational" principles and his methods of struggle were roundly condemned by all sections of the Russian social movement in the 1870s and 1880s, with the exception of the staunch Bakuninists who sought to rehabilitate Nechayev and Bakunin.

We could cite dozens of their contemporaries to leave no doubt on this score. Vera Zasulich, O. Aptekman, Dzhabadari, N. Charushin, P. Lavrov, Debagory-Mokrievich, Svetozar Marcovic, L. Deutsch and many other revolutionaries of the 1870s and 1880s described Nechayevism as a graphic example of negative revolutionary experience, as an attempt to demoralise the movement and "turn it back", as a "venture deceiving other comrades". They all constantly stressed that "falsehood cannot be made a means of disseminating truth", that the revolutionaries "should never seek to establish an organisation of Nechayev's type", that such an organisation would perish if not at the hands of the enemies from without, then "through disintegration", etc.<sup>1</sup>

Even liberal Russian historians who are constantly cited in contemporary foreign essays about Nechayevism found no traces of this movement in the Narodism of the 1870s and subsequent years. "In the Russian revolutionary movement, Nechayevism was merely an exceptional episode," V. Bogucharsky wrote. "As such, it had no roots in any past

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<sup>1</sup> See V. Zasulich, *Vospominaniya (Reminiscences)*, Moscow, 1931, p. 57; O. V. Aptekman, *Obshchestvo "Zemlya i Volya" 70kh godov (The "Land and Freedom" Society in the Seventies)*, Petrograd, 1924, pp. 59-60; *Byloye*, 1907, No. 9 (21), p. 183; V. Figner, *Polnoye sobraniye sochinenii (Collected Works)*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1932, p. 91; P. L. Lavrov, *Narodniki-Propagandisty, 1873-1878 (Narodnik Propagandists, 1873-1878)*, Leningrad, 1925, pp. 31, 158; N. A. Charushin, *O dalekom proshlom (Of the Remote Past)*, Parts I and II, Moscow, 1926, pp. 78-79; *Obshchestvenno-politicheskiye i kulturniye svyazi narodov S.S.S.R. i Yugoslavii (Socio-Political and Cultural Ties Between the Peoples of the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia)*, *Collected Articles*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 330-31.

movement and evoked a definitely negative attitude towards itself among the succeeding generations of the revolutionary youth. . . . It would be absolutely wrong to judge the movement itself by Nechayevism."<sup>1</sup>

Here is another noteworthy moment: even Nechayev's contemporaries came to the conclusion that Nechayevism was an offspring of the old regime and not of the revolution. "The editors of *Vperyod* [Forward]," P. L. Lavrov wrote, "held from the very beginning that the truth and solidarity of the new social system could not be based on falsehood and hypocrisy, on the exploitation of man by man, on the speculation with the principles which were to constitute the foundation of the new system, on the sheep-like subordination of the circles to a few leaders. . . . Not one of its leading contributors ever went back on his conviction that this 'survival of old society' in new leaders was not only amoral but that it undermined the very principles for which the Socialist Party was fighting."<sup>2</sup>

The above-mentioned facts fully suffice to draw the following indisputable conclusion: real Russian revolutionaries were not building up Nechayevist traditions, as slanderers would have one believe, but were fighting against them, denouncing them. Nechayevism was unanimously condemned even by the leaders of the petty-bourgeois Narodnik movement of the 1870s and 1880s. All the more hostile and alien to this phenomenon was the proletarian movement in the West and, later, in Russia.

Nechayev appeared abroad at the time the struggle between Marxism and anarchism, between the International and the Bakuninist Alliance was gaining momentum. This period was distinguished for two important developments. The first was the establishment of contact between the international working-class movement and the Russian revolutionary émigrés in Europe through the Russian section of the International. The second was the conclusion of an alliance between the Western and Russian anarchist movements, the latter

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<sup>1</sup> V. Bogucharsky, *Aktivnoye Narodnichestvo semidesyatykh godov* (Active Narodism in the 1870s), Moscow, 1912, pp. 134, 151.

<sup>2</sup> P. L. Lavrov, *Izbrannnye sochineniya na sotsialno-politicheskiye temy* (Selected Socio-Political Works), Vol. 3, Moscow, 1934, pp. 362-63.

represented by Bakuninism and Nechayevism, with a view to seizing the leadership of the international revolutionary movement and subordinating it "to the covert dictatorship of a few adventurers."<sup>1</sup> Seeking to take advantage of the International's authority, the anarchists constantly abused its name, deliberately confused people about their own and the International's programmes, about the International Working Men's Association and the Bakunist Alliance of Socialist Democracy. This made it possible for foreign and Russian reaction to discredit the International, to blame it for the European anarchists' adventures and crimes.

In its letter of March 12, 1870, the Committee of the Russian Section of the First International asked Marx to represent it in the General Council of the International and stressed that the Russian internationalists had "absolutely nothing in common with Mr. Bakunin and his few followers. . . . It is imperative to expose the hypocrisy of these false friends of political and social equality who really dream only of becoming dictators."<sup>2</sup>

In August 1870, Bakunin and his minions were expelled from the Central Geneva Section of the First International. The Nechayev issue figured prominently on the agenda of the London Conference of the International in September 1871. The decision of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association of October 16, 1871, said:

"That *Nechayev* has never been a member or an agent of the *International Working Men's Association*; that his assertions to have founded a branch at Brussels and to have been sent by a Brussels branch on a mission to Geneva, are false; that the above-said *Nechayev* has fraudulently used the name of the *International Working Men's Association* in order to make dupes and victims in Russia."<sup>3</sup>

In 1873, Marx and Engels published *L'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste et l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs*, which exposed the international intrigues of the anarchists. This work thoroughly analysed Nechayevism,

<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 18, Berlin, 1962, p. 539.

<sup>2</sup> *Perepiska K. Marksa i F. Engelsa s russkimi politicheskimi deyatelyami* (K. Marx's and F. Engels's Correspondence with Russian Political Leaders), Moscow, 1951, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 17, Berlin, 1962, p. 435.

bared its counter-revolutionary nature and elucidated its class essence. "We have before us a society which, operating in the guise of extreme anarchism, strikes not at the existing governments but at the revolutionaries who reject its dogmas and leadership," Marx and Engels wrote. "It does not stop at any means, any treachery to achieve its aims; lies, calumny, intimidation, attacks from the back—it is equal to them all. Lastly, in Russia, it is usurping upon the International and, acting in its name, commits crimes, frauds, murder, and the responsibility for all this is placed by the government and bourgeois press on our Association."<sup>1</sup>

All the statements made against Nechayevism by Marx and Engels underscore two points: on the one hand, its harm and danger to the cause of the revolution and communism; on the other hand, its absurdity, ridiculousness and uselessness. Unexposed, acting in the dark, from behind a corner, Nechayevism was dangerous and frightful; exposed and publicly condemned, it was loathsome and wretched. "Darkness, more darkness"—such was the slogan of Nechayevism, the precondition for adventurism masking as revolutionism. "Light, more light"—such was the proletariat's slogan in its struggle against Nechayevism, the precondition for the existence and development of proletarian democracy. "There is only one weapon against all these intrigues," Marx and Engels wrote, "but it possesses devastating power—full publicity. To expose these intrigues altogether is to deprive them of all strength."<sup>2</sup>

Having exposed the rotten core of Nechayevism, Marx and Engels smashed the sophisms of the Bakuninist leaders of the Alliance who advised the revolutionaries to be Jesuits "only with the aim of emancipating and not enslaving the people".<sup>3</sup> Jesuitism acting in the name of the revolution did not mean delusion of people employing rotten means to achieve noble aims. It was at once distortion of both the means and aims of revolutionary struggle, the organic combination of false methods and false principles, for true principles upheld by methods of violence and lies cannot

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 18, Berlin, 1962, pp. 333-34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.



but become their opposite. "What a splendid specimen of regimented communism!" Marx and Engels wrote commenting on the "Main Foundations of the Future Social Order", Nechayev's programmatic article in which, allegedly proceeding from the *Communist Manifesto*, he depicted "communism" as a society based on the principle of "producing as much as possible and consuming as little as possible", on compulsory labour under the pain of death, and on the regulation by the "Committee" of all personal relations, up to and including the upbringing of children.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, Marx and Engels bared the class roots of Nechayevism, characterising it as "bourgeois immorality" carried to the extreme. We might recall that Lenin characterised anarchism as "bourgeois *individualism* in reverse".<sup>2</sup> Applied to Nechayevism, these theses mean that Nechayevism was the offspring of reaction, flesh and blood, that it was not the enemy of reaction but its closest ally and friend. Nechayevism actually became reaction's weapon in its struggle with the revolution—firstly, because it was physically destroying the revolutionaries and, secondly, because it allowed to discredit them by identifying them with Nechayev.

How gladly and enthusiastically the reactionaries and the falsifiers of history, from the venal journalists of the 1870s to the Kohns of today, have been seizing upon Nechayevism to palm off their own fruit upon the revolutionaries, the Communists! With a pious look, they have been accusing the Communists of the sins they themselves commit. No sooner had they drowned the Paris Commune in blood in 1871 than they started flinging lies and mud at revolutionaries, live and dead. And today, to be able to accuse the Marxists-Leninists of Nechayevism, the reactionaries and especially the opportunists and the revisionists identify it with the principle of centralism. Therein lies the basic sophism of the calumniators of the past and present.

The enemies of the revolution want the proletariat to renounce the socialist revolution (which they—and not the Marxists—have identified once and for all with violence and bloodshed), the proletarian party, the strict discipline in it—if

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 18, pp. 424, 425.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 327.

it does not, it is accused of practising Nechayevism. But distortion of true principles by anyone can never be made a pretext for their renunciation. What is more, there are different kinds of centralism. The centralism of the Communist Party is democratic. Marx and Engels were staunch advocates of proper combination of democracy and centralism. Lenin stressed dozens of times that organisation was essential for the victory of the proletariat and upheld, in the Party, the principle of united action and genuinely ironcast centralism. He always maintained that the democratic character of this centralism was a prerequisite for the Party's viability, its ideological unity, its consciousness and its ability to lead the masses. "More confidence in the independent judgment of the whole body of Party workers," he wrote. "... *The whole Party* must constantly, steadily and systematically *train* suitable persons for the central bodies, must see clearly, as in the palm of its hand, *all the activities* of every candidate for these high posts, must come to know even their personal characteristics, their strong and weak points, their victories and 'defeats'. . . . Light, more light."<sup>1</sup>

The principle of democratic centralism was strictly adhered to back in the years of the first Russian revolution, as soon as the Party acquired an opportunity for more or less overt political activity. The Bolshevik Party, Lenin stressed then, was striving "towards consistent centralism and consistent extension of the democratic principle in Party organisations, not for the sake of demagogy, or because it sounds good, but in order to put this into effect as Social-Democracy's free field of activity extends in Russia."<sup>2</sup>

This Leninist thesis remained in force both before and after the Bolsheviks' advent to power. Lenin always emphasised that the proletariat had no weapon in fighting for power other than organisation, that organisation should be militant and centralised, and he insisted on extending centralism in the Party along with democratism.

What we have said about the senseless analogy between Nechayev and Lenin applies to Kohn's analogies between

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 116-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 291.

Tkachov and Lenin and Bakunin and Lenin.<sup>1</sup> Every historian knows that the Russian revolutionary movement's transition from Utopian peasant "socialism" to proletarian socialism at the same time meant a complete switchover from conspiracy and tactical adventurism to the tactics of mass political struggle. But Hans Kohn, defying the facts, alleges that Bolshevism . . . continued with Tkachov's plotting traditions, that Lenin adopted the Tkachov thesis that "backward" Russia would be "ripe for a socialist revolution as soon as a closely knit, determined and armed small minority was able to seize power and to impose its will".<sup>2</sup>

Tkachov did indeed uphold Blanquist principles, but does that justify Kohn's claims that they were typical of Russian conditions in general? After all, conspiracy-Blanquism—was the tactics employed by the revolutionary movement in its infancy. It flourished in the West and the East when the masses were still immature, when the revolutionary, setting more store by the satisfaction of his impatience than by the historical facts, sought to accomplish a revolution by imposing the will of the minority on the majority, deluding himself and others with fables that the enemy was "weak", that he was "wavering", that the people were "ripe", that it was "now or never". How can one compare this babble with Marxism-Leninism, the ideology of the mature and virile proletarian movement, the ideology which from the very first was forged in an irreconcilable struggle against conspiracy, against Blanquism.

"Blanquist, conspiratorial traditions are frightfully strong among the former [Narodniks], so much so, that they cannot conceive of political struggle except in the form of political conspiracy," Lenin pointed out. "The Social-Democrats,

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we are not analysing the arguments of the bourgeois "studies" undertaken to discover not only Nechayevist traits in Bolshevism but Bakuninist and Tkachovist traits as well. Here we deal only with the basic method they employ. In the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s the influence exerted by Marxism on the international revolutionary movement increased rapidly and, as a result, many petty-bourgeois theories were passed off as "Marxist". In the final count, the "specialists" of whom we shall speak below devoted their efforts to singling out "Marxist"-sounding phrases and theses in these eclectic theories and to comparing them to doctored Leninist theories.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 41.

however, are not guilty of such a narrow outlook; they do not believe in conspiracies; they think that the period of conspiracies has long passed away, that to reduce political struggle to conspiracy means, on the one hand, immensely restricting its scope, and, on the other hand, choosing the most unsuitable methods of struggle."<sup>1</sup>

This was written in 1897, when Lenin was just setting out to build a party. These traditions—traditions of struggle against adventurism, Blanquism and all sorts of conspiracies—were later upheld and developed by the Bolsheviks with consistence and perseverance. It is not for nothing that on the very eve of the revolution Lenin, calling on the masses to rise, once again stressed the contrast between Blanquism and Marxism, the difference between a narrow plot and a popular rising, the gap between a superficial coup and the deep-going revolution of the masses. And it is no chance accident that Kohn omits these Leninist theses—he does it to turn Lenin into a Blanquist.

"The techniques of the Bolshevik revolution were those proposed by Bakunin," he goes on asserting.<sup>2</sup> But just how "suitable" Bakunin's techniques are for the victorious proletarian revolution was shown back in the 1870s—by the Nechayev trial in Russia and especially by the Spanish revolt of 1873-74, when anarchism fully proved that it was merely a revolutionary term, supplemented with ineffective and senseless practical deeds.

One of the most widespread ways of falsifying history is to hush up facts, and so Prof. Kohn desists from saying what the "techniques of Bakunin" were actually like and what the revolutionary Marxists thought of them. And yet in his article "The Bakuninists at Work", Engels painted a brilliant picture of how the anarchist principles of political forbearance at the crucial points of political struggle led to the collapse of popular risings. The Bakunist "techniques" in Spain, it may be recalled, amounted to criminally dispersing the means of revolutionary struggle and this permitted "the government with a handful of troops to subdue one city after another almost without resistance. . . ." "In a word," Engels concluded,

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 116.

"the Bakuninists in Spain have given us an unsurpassable example of how *not* to make a revolution."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin continued with the traditions of Marx's International with regard to Bakuninism. A product of despair, the psychology of the unsettled intellectual or the vagabond, and not of the proletarian, vocal protest against the exploiting system and absolute lack of any idea how to destroy it—so did Lenin define the essence of anarchism in general and Bakuninism in particular.

He wrote:

"Anarchism, in the course of the 35 or 40 years (Bakunin and the *International*, 1866—) of its existence (and with Stirner included, in the course of many more years) has produced nothing but general platitudes against *exploitation*.

"These phrases have been current for more than 2,000 years. What is missing is (a) an understanding of the *causes* of exploitation; (b) an understanding of the *development* of society, which leads to socialism; (c) an understanding of the *class struggle* as the creative force for the realisation of socialism. . . .

"What has anarchism, at one time dominant in the Romance countries, contributed in recent European history?

"No doctrine, revolutionary teaching, or theory.

"Fragmentation of the working-class movement.

"Complete fiasco in the experiments of the revolutionary movement (Proudhonism, 1871; Bakuninism, 1873).

"Subordination of the working class to *bourgeois* politics in the guise of negation of politics."<sup>2</sup>

It is noteworthy that the works of historians of Kohn's type have one common trait, or rather they follow the same logical pattern. In reducing the Russian revolution to a conspiracy and Leninism to extremism, they naturally make Nechayev, Bakunin and Tkachov the objects of their special studies. But even occupying themselves with "their" objects in Russian history, they falsify instead of studying these objects and prove themselves incapable not only of assessing the facts but even of summing them up. One quotation from

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<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Revolution in Spain*, New York, pp. 235-36.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 327-28.

Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*, a pair of phrases borrowed from Berdayev—that is practically the entire “factual” foundation of Kohn's cardinal idea about the “Nechayevist traditions” in the Russian revolution. A single reference to Pyzuir, the “authoritative” specialist in Bakuninism and—presto!—he proves the kinship of Bakunin and Bolshevism. One excerpt from Tkachov, its comparison with a “doctored” letter of Lenin's—and Lenin is proclaimed a Blanquist.

It may be objected, of course, that Kohn has written a “basic” history of Russia and is not obliged to cite and analyse all the facts, that he has proceeded from the factual material amassed by his colleagues. But these colleagues too, though “students” of Nechayev, Bakunin and Tkachov, give rein to fantasy instead of studying the facts.

Eugene Pyzuir published a special monograph entitled *The Doctrine of Anarchism of Michael A. Bakunin* in 1955, and it is from this monograph that Hans Kohn drew his information about Bakunin. It would seem that the author of a special essay should study his object seriously. But Pyzuir confined himself to ladling a dozen or two “almost Marxist-sounding” quotations from the Bakunist theoretical *pot-pouri*. There is not an inkling of an analysis of Lenin's works, of an analysis of Bakunist and Bolshevik tactics.

Robert V. Daniels, who had made a “special” study of the Lenin-Tkachov parallel too, tried to illustrate in his article “Lenin and the Russian Revolutionary Tradition” the close analogy of Lenin's and Tkachov's slogans.

Here is an example of Daniels's “syllogisms”. “Tkachov had written . . . ‘We cannot wait. . . We assert that the revolution in Russia is urgently essential, and essential at this very time. . . It is now or very remote, perhaps never!’” Lenin “also” had written: “The Bolsheviks . . . must take power immediately. . . To hesitate is a crime. . . It is my deepest conviction that if we ‘await’ the Congress of Soviets and let the present moment pass, we ruin the revolution.” And Daniels concluded: Lenin was a Tkachovist! The fact that Tkachov wrote in the 1870s, when there was no advanced revolutionary movement in Russia and no mass revolutionary organisation, and that Lenin wrote almost half a century later, at the height of the deep revolutionary crisis, when there was a militant and organised proletarian party

which had the support of millions of working people, did not bother Daniels in the least. He saw no difference between the situation in the 1870s and the situation in October 1917.<sup>1</sup>

A special historical symposium entitled *Bolshevism* was published in Munich in 1956. One of the authors, Fyodor Stepun, a prominent White Russian émigré, also engages in a special study of the links between Nechayevism and Bolshevism. What does Stepun tell us? He discovers "internal kinship" between these two trends in their "passionate and aggressive atheism" (one could just as well accuse the French bourgeois enlighteners and, say, Lord Bertrand Russell of being Nechayevists). He further affirms that Lenin's ideal Communist was one who was "blindly obedient" (although one could cite thousands of Lenin's pronouncements and, what is more important, innumerable facts showing that he put the consciousness of Party members and of the masses above all else). Lastly, this inveterate slanderer attributes to Lenin the monstrous assertion that on the barricades a hardened criminal was preferable to a convinced Social-Democrat!<sup>2</sup> Lenin had never said anything like that, but the absence of facts in this case does not embarrass Stepun, for his activity in science is actually tantamount to brigandage and his amorality makes him akin to Nechayev.

Anarchism and Nechayevism are the mortal enemies of Leninism. This is clear, and not only to the historian. It is clear to anyone, however little familiar with the facts, to anyone possessing even a bit of common sense. In Russia, Nechayev's and Bakunin's "organisation principles" enabled them to deceive a dozen of people into founding a conspiratorial organisation and then to ruin them by revolutionary charlatanism a month or two later. The organisation principles of Bolshevism, on the other hand, made it possible to unite thousands in a militant proletarian party despite ruthless persecution and repressions, to draw millions of people into a conscious revolutionary struggle and accomplish the greatest social revolution in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> R. V. Daniels, *Lenin and the Russian Revolutionary Tradition*, *Harvard Slavic Studies*, Vol. IV, 1957, Cambridge, Mass., pp. 343-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Bolschewismus*, Munich, 1956, pp. 212, 213, 214.

Historians like Kohn, Daniels, Pyzuir and Stepun, who tell their readers fables about "Nechayevist traditions" in Leninism, are in every respect worthy of their spiritual ancestors, the Russian gendarmes of the Third Department of whom defence counsel Spasovich said at the 1871 trial: "When the masses go into motion, to suppose that this is the result of incitement is to emulate the publicist who, looking at the French revolution, keeps on shouting, 'Intrigue!' All such an explanation proves is lack of understanding or unscrupulousness in the choice of means, or both."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin rightly said there was an abyss between communism and anarchism, between the outlooks of a proletarian sure of victory and a petty bourgeois despairing of his salvation. The Kohns, the Stepuns, the Pyzuirs and their ilk will never fill this abyss even if all the publishing houses in the "free Western world" print nothing but libellous literature.

The truly positive traditions inherited by Bolshevism from the Russian revolution were traditions of selflessness, self-sacrifice, intolerance of injustice and falsehood. It was not only the progressive socio-political ideas of the Russian revolutionaries which attracted all honest people and especially the youth. The power of attraction was all the greater because the revolutionaries—Radishchev and the Decembrists, Belinsky and Herzen, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, the revolutionary Narodniks and the proletarian revolutionaries, Lenin and the Bolsheviks—were morally clean. They did not have to create legends about themselves, their life itself was a real feat. They did not need artificial fame; they had won real fame and immortality by their deeds.

### **What the Admirers of Dostoyevsky's "The Possessed" By-Pass in Silence**

The historical facts completely belie the allegations that the Bolsheviks continue with the traditions of "Russian extremism". When the historical facts are against Kohn, he hides behind some authority. To prove his "theory of nationalism" he has cited the great historian François Guizot; to

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravitelstvenny Vestnik* No. 167, 1871.



prove his charge that the Bolsheviks are "extremists" he cites the great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Kohn refers at length to *The Possessed*, in which Nechayev is depicted as a typical Russian revolutionary under the name of Pyotr Verkhovensky. The "key" to the understanding of the Russian revolution, the Professor affirms, is to be found in Dostoyevsky's "dialectics of extremism", which, arising from boundless freedom, ends in "unlimited despotism".

Kohn, of course, is by far not the only admirer of *The Possessed* in the Western world. There are more than enough of them. "There was no other novel written in the nineteenth century which foresaw more clearly the political upheavals of the twentieth century," tens and hundreds of "researchers" agree. "Exposure of nihilism", "revelation of the Russian revolution", "a political testament"—in these appraisals of *The Possessed* Kohn is supported by the Catholic theologians who are out to drive atheistic communism from this world and the corrupt bourgeois publicists, "literati" and "historians" who specialise in anti-Sovieteering.<sup>1</sup>

Dostoyevsky did write a libellous novel about the Russian revolutionaries in the early 1870s, and it is not surprising that slanderers now make use of his errors. He had long been thinking of writing a novel which would combine all his earlier attacks on the revolutionaries. Dostoyevsky heard about the Nechayev case when he was abroad—he had been living there for several years and maintained contact with Russia through Katkov and other people like him. This finally decided him and gave him an idea what to write about. He wrote unusually fast. Nechayev's name first appeared in the newspapers in January 1870, and on October 19 of that year Dostoyevsky sent Katkov the first chapters of *The Possessed*. On April 5, 1870, Dostoyevsky wrote N. Strakhov: "I set great hopes on the thing I am now writing for *Russky Vestnik* [*Russian Herald*] but from the point of view of

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<sup>1</sup> The list of works whose authors speculate on Dostoyevsky's errors is longer than this whole chapter. The above-mentioned typical quotations are from H. Kohn's *The Mind of Modern Russia*, New York, 1955, p. 12; R. Curle, *Characters of Dostoyevsky*, London, 1950, pp. 120, 158, 164; W. Nigg, *Prophetische Denker*, Zurich, 1957, pp. 351, 358, 371, 373; F. Stepun, *Der Bolshevismus und die christliche Existenz*, Munich, 1959, p. 240.

tendentiousness, not artistry. I must say a few things even if it will mean the end of my artistic career."<sup>1</sup>

And so artistry (which is a synonym of truth for every true artist) was deliberately sacrificed to tendentiousness. What did this tendentiousness imply? In *Crime and Punishment* Dostoyevsky had already tried to substantiate the biased idea that revolutionary violence and crime are actually one and the same thing. Now his false conception acquired a "factual foundation". But what were these facts? "I knew nothing of Nechayev or of Ivanov or of the circumstances of the murder," Dostoyevsky said, "and I still know nothing except what I have read in the newspapers."<sup>2</sup> The "facts", which the prejudiced author used and which, he thought, impregnated his scheme, had been clearly distorted by the reactionary press. When the author returned to St. Petersburg in July 1871, he was given the Nechayev trial documents concocted by the Third Department. Dostoyevsky's predilection, reinforced by falsified facts, could not but engender a fallacious work.

But if one delves into the sources of contradictions in the works of this brilliant author, one finds that the analysis of the content of a novel even like *The Possessed* militates against the reactionary tendencies of Dostoyevsky himself, to say nothing of those who wanted to multiply their moral and political capital at his expense. Whatever evolution he may have gone through (and Dostoyevsky, as is well known, started out as a socialist), whatever attacks he may have launched at the revolutionaries whom he did not understand and at whom he cast aspersion, he never once panegyricised capitalism. As far as he was concerned, and that is something the admirers of *The Possessed* prefer to keep silent about, capitalism was always the greatest of all evils. The writer's tragedy was that he preferred religious humility and non-resistance to evil to revolutionary struggle against the old feudal-bourgeois world. Dostoyevsky, an artist who could pose extremely important questions, was a powerless and sorry figure when it came to answering them.

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<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dostoyevsky, *Pisma (Letters)*, Vol. 2, Moscow-Leningrad, 1930, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

In his novels, he tackled two of the problems advanced by the impending revolution, and got the wrong answers to both.

Since reaction employs violence to prevent the masses from satisfying their just demands and upholding their vital interests, the masses are compelled to resort to violence against reaction. The revolution can destroy the old world only with the hands of people brought up by this world, and so all sorts of scum join its ranks—people broken, mutilated and maimed by the old system.

But, having reduced the revolution to violence for the sake of violence and identified all the revolutionaries with this scum, Dostoyevsky committed a terrible but explicable error. Out of pity for the sick, he mistook the scalpel for a bandit's knife, and raised his voice of a humanist against the inhumanity of the doctor. He saw nothing in the revolution but still greater suffering for the old world. He failed to understand that in reshaping the social system people were reshaping their own nature, that the scum and filth keep on the surface of the revolutionary torrent only when this torrent is weak and are washed away when it becomes strong and deep.

Playing up Dostoyevsky's errors in every way, the bourgeois historians as a rule by-pass the strong points of his creative work and say nothing about the sources of his contradictions. Dostoyevsky is against communism! Dostoyevsky is for Christianity! Dostoyevsky is our ally! That is the underlying idea of all modern studies. But Dostoyevsky was not only a religious man, not only an opponent of communism which he did not understand and which he defamed.

He was a mortal enemy of the exploiting system all his life. When he said that because the Communists did not believe in God there was "nothing to restrain" them, he merely gauged communism by the bourgeois yardstick. "No restraint" is the essence of the exploiters' morality in general and of the bourgeois morality in particular, and the writer himself testifies to this by stigmatising the amorality of bourgeois society.

"What is 'liberté'?" he wrote. It is freedom. What sort of freedom? Equal freedom for all to do as they please within the bounds of law. When can one do as one pleases? When

one has a million. Does freedom give everyone a million? No. What is a man without a million? A man without a million is not one who does as he pleases but a man with whom one does as one pleases."<sup>1</sup> Almost all of Dostoyevsky's works are dedicated to the artistic expression of this notion. Who are his favourite heroes? They are the "poor people", the "humiliated and insulted", the people "with whom one does as one pleases".

Indestructible conviction in the inhumanity of the society where the "chief prince is a Rothschild" and money is "minted freedom"—therein lies the key to understanding the artist's extremely complicated attitude to socialism, to the revolution and to atheism.

Dostoyevsky opposed socialism not in the name of the bourgeois system but because he was against this system. This fact is concealed in bourgeois literature. It is "overlooked" by those who collect the writer's anti-revolutionary statements, know them by heart, dote on them and refuse to understand their meaning. Dostoyevsky accuses the socialists of the same sins as the bourgeoisie. He does not regard socialism as an antipode of the bourgeois system. To him, it is a variant of this system.

Here is what he says of capitalism: "One-tenth of mankind will rise to the highest level of development and the remaining nine-tenths will merely serve as the material and means enabling them to do it." And here is his picture of "socialism": "One-tenth enjoys absolute liberty and unbounded power over the other nine-tenths."

Let us compare the following two arguments. The first: "Great intellects are not wanted. They will be banished or put to death. Cicero had his tongue cut out, Copernicus had his eyes put out, Shakespeare was stoned. . . ." And now the second: "It gave me the greatest pleasure to imagine a really untalented and mediocre being, facing the world and telling it with a smile: You are the Galileos and the Copernicuses, the Charlemagnes and the Napoleons, the Pushkins and the Shakespeares, the marshals and the chamberlains, and I am a mediocrity and an outlaw, and still I am your superior. . . ."

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<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dostoyevsky, *Sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. 4, Moscow, 1957, p. 105.

The coincidence of these ideas speaks for itself. But in the first instance these ideas belong to a "socialist" (*The Possessed*) and in the second to a person who dreams of becoming a Rothschild (*A Raw Youth*).

For every accusation levelled against the socialists there is an analogous accusation against the bourgeois. The mix-up of social addresses, noted in Marxist literature, revealed itself most graphically in *The Possessed* written hot on the scent of the Nechayev trial.

The main character of the novel, "socialist" Pyotr Verkhovensky, says: "Nothing has more influence than a title. I invent ranks and duties on purpose. . . . Then, the next force is sentimentalism. . . . And the most important force of all—the cement that holds everything together—the shame of having an opinion of one's own. . . . Every member of the society spies on the others, and it's his duty to inform against them. . . . All are slaves and equal in their slavery. In extreme cases, slander and murder. . . . We'll stifle every genius in its infancy. We'll reduce all to a common denominator! Complete equality! Absolute submission, absolute loss of individuality. . . ."

It is quite obvious that to depict the ideals of the Paris Commune, the socialism of Herzen and Chernyshevsky (to say nothing of Marxist communism) in such a crazy way is to repeat dirty slander. If Nechayevism was a caricature of socialism, the ideas propagated by Verkhovensky are a caricature of Nechayevism.<sup>1</sup> And Dostoyevsky himself confirms it. Involuntarily respecting (and even fearing) the real revolutionaries and socialists, and knowing that not one of them will support Nechayev, and still less Verkhovensky, he makes the latter admit: "I am a scoundrel, of course, and not a socialist!" Dostoyevsky thus invalidates his own "criticism" of socialism: in reality, what he exposes is not a badly mistaken socialist but a shrewd swindler, a monster, a real social scum.

As for Dostoyevsky's Christian ideals, how can one forget that he regarded Christianity as a weapon against the bourgeois system? What is more, one finds an atheistic trend

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<sup>1</sup> Consequently, one should not identify Verkhovensky even with Nechayev who, incidentally, really thought he was a socialist.

in his works. Atheism breaks through the religious dressing of his works in the form of inextinguishable flames in which the old, wretched rags of religion burned out, leaving nothing behind them but pungent fumes. The writer could never extinguish these flames. God "tortured" him all his life. The words the monk Alyosha Karamazov utters when asked what should be done with the murderer of an innocent child—"shoot him!"—sound stronger than all sermons about saving the world without resisting violence. For this is said by a monk!

Paradoxical though it may be, irreconcilable hatred of capitalism so blinded Dostoyevsky that he accused nascent communism of the sins committed by the obsolescent system. Verkhovensky was an exponent of the loathsome moral principles of the old world. Dostoyevsky was definitely right in protesting against these principles. But, being an organic element of the old world, Verkhovensky was just as organically alien to the world of the imminent revolution. Dostoyevsky simply mistook the products of the collapse of the old world, which were infecting the new life, for the embryo of this new life and for this reason turned his back on the new. He lost his way, thinking that religion and not the revolution would save the world from the amorality of disintegrating society, although religion in the final analysis sanctions this amorality and the revolution radically alters society's anti-human social relations. In this sense, the epigraph Dostoyevsky chose for *The Possessed*:

*Strike me dead, the track has vanished,  
Well, what now? We've lost the way,  
Demons have bewitched our horses,  
Led us in the winds astray. . .*

is best applied to his own convictions in the 1860s and 1870s.

In the early twentieth century, especially in the period of Stolypin reaction, the *Vekhi* group took advantage of Dostoyevsky's errors to bait the revolutionaries. Writing in *Vekhi*, Bulgakov characterised the revolution as a "legion of devils who have entered the gigantic body of Russia". In the symposium *De Profundis (Out of the Depths)*, Berdayev affirmed in 1918 that *The Possessed* "prophesied" the Russian revolution. The same assertions may be found in his books

*Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunisma* (*The Sources and Meaning of Russian Communism*) published in 1937 and *Russkaya ideya* (*The Russian Idea*) in 1946. It is from the *Vekhi* group that the present-day "Russian experts" like Kohn borrow their information.

In the present case, the question of whether the material we have analysed comes from Dostoyevsky directly or indirectly—through the *Vekhi* group—does not make any difference. *The "source" of the version that the Bolsheviks are "extremists" is still the old Third Department frame-up, the old gendarme slander.*

There is no real history of Russian democracy in Kohn's books. Nor do they contain the real history of Russian liberalism.

### **Russian Liberals and "People's Freedom"**

The birth and death of liberalism is one of the most instructive chapters in Russian history. And what does Hans Kohn teach one on this subject? First, he alleges, the liberal movement came into existence in 1890 and was inspired by the Western constitutional ideas. But the government, he says, did not welcome the Zemstvo<sup>1</sup> liberals' attempts to organise literacy societies, improve public health and carry out other "long overdue reforms". On the contrary, it "persecuted their initiators and dissolved the societies". After that, in 1902, some liberal leaders founded the newspaper *Osvobozhdeniye* (*Emancipation*) under the editorship of the "former Marxist" Struve. In 1903, Kohn continues, they founded the *Osvobozhdeniye* League<sup>2</sup> which gave birth in 1905 to the "Constitutional-Democratic Party, whose members

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<sup>1</sup> *Zemstvos*—the name by which local self-government bodies in the rural districts were known; they were set up in the central gubernias of tsarist Russia in 1864. The *Zemstvos* were dominated by the nobility and their competence was limited to purely local economic and welfare matters (hospital and road building, statistics, insurance, etc.). They functioned under the control of the governors of the gubernias and the Ministry of the Interior, which could block any decisions the government found undesirable.

<sup>2</sup> Actually *Osvobozhdeniye* League was founded early in January 1904.

were generally known as Cadets, an abbreviation formed by the initials of the Russian name of the party". "Consisting of highly educated and patriotic citizens, the liberal party could have grown into the instrument for transforming Russian autocracy into a regime of liberty under law," the Professor wrote. "Three reasons prevented such a development: the conceited stubbornness and the malevolent stupidity of the government; the lack of parliamentary experience in Russia; and the chaos which the First World War, coming a decade after the formation of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, produced. Many precious and promising seeds of a free Russia and a full partner of the European community were sown during the course of modern Russian history, but human failure and historical contingency did not grant them time to ripen."<sup>1</sup>

Above we affirmed that there was no real history of Russian democracy in Hans Kohn's "essays". Now we have seen for ourselves that there is no real history of Russian liberalism in them either. It is true that the names of the Russian bourgeois leaders and of the liberal organisations and societies and the deciphering of the word "Cadet" are necessary to describe the developments correctly, but besides all this the Russian bourgeoisie had its *economic* history, besides the names of newspapers and parties it had a definite *political programme*. As for the "patriotism" and the "enlightening" work of the Zemstvo officials and the Cadets, one learns best from their *deeds*.

Capitalism began to develop in Russia later than in the rest of Europe, for the feudal foundations there were especially strong and political power was concentrated in the hands of the autocratic government. Preserving the obsolete feudal and semi-feudal forms of landownership, retarding the expansion of the domestic market and preventing the development of capitalism in depth, tsarism gave industrialists millions in subsidies and state orders, acquired new colonial markets for the bourgeoisie, and created conditions for the development of capitalism in width. The autocratic state hampered free enterprise by bureaucratic interference and yet its customs policy helped the Russian capitalists withstand

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, pp. 60-61.



foreign competition. While systematically preventing the bourgeoisie from taking part in the country's political administration, tsarism nevertheless enhanced its economic rule, that is, capital's domination of labour. It was thus that bribery of officials and monopoly machinations developed over the decades into a regular system. Right until the twentieth century, the Russian capitalist looked more like a dependent than the country's "master". "Why is the development of capitalism and culture proceeding at a snail's pace? Why are we falling farther and farther behind?" Lenin asked. "Our industrial satraps are afraid to answer this question, which is quite clear to any politically conscious worker, because they are satraps. They are not the representatives of capital that is free and strong, like that of America; they are a handful of monopolists protected by state aid and by thousands of intrigues and deals with the very Black-Hundred<sup>1</sup> landowners whose medieval land tenure (about 70 million dessiatines of the best land) and oppression condemn five-sixths of the population to poverty, and the entire country to stagnation and decay."<sup>2</sup>

There are volumes and volumes speaking of the very close ties between the Russian bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and monarchism and the landowners, on the other. But one will only waste one's time trying to find any reference to such facts in Kohn's works.

It is the specific conditions in which Russian capitalism developed that explain the lack of political organisation and political impotence of the Russian bourgeoisie. Right up to 1905, "the nobility played at liberalism and made respectful references to a constitution, while the merchants seemed more satisfied, less oppositional."<sup>3</sup>

In the first fifty years of its existence (incidentally, it came into being in the 1860s and not in the 1890s), the Zemstvo landowner-liberal movement failed to become a factor of any importance in the country's political life. Striving to acquire freedom in the conditions of the autocratic

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<sup>1</sup> *The Black Hundreds*—monarchist gangs formed by the tsarist police to fight the revolutionary movement. They murdered revolutionaries, assaulted progressive intellectuals and organised pogroms.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

regime which was incompatible with any freedom, thinking less of political struggle than of avoiding "taking very high political notes", and doing everything to undermine the revolutionary movement—the movement which alone guaranteed the country's liberation and the Zemstvo's own independent existence—the Zemstvo never amounted to anything more than a talking-shop that was politically unorganised and impotent.

The political stand of the Russian Zemstvo liberals—expressed in the well-known formulas: "negation of government and revolutionary terror" (the Zemstvo Union's 1881 programme), and negation of "all violence wherever it comes from, above or below" (Struve's *Osvobozhdeniye*)<sup>1</sup>—did a great deal to help preserve the old order in the country. In its struggle against "sedition", tsarism easily neutralised the Zemstvo officials by giving them a bit of its confidence and taking it away after it had done with the revolutionary movement. "This treacherous policy of grandiloquence and shameful flabbiness met with poetic justice," Lenin wrote about the Russian "Hannibals of Liberalism". "Having dealt with those who proved themselves capable, not merely of jabbering about liberty, but of *fighting* for it, the government felt sufficiently strong to squeeze the liberals out of even the minor and inferior positions which they had occupied 'with the permission of the authorities'."<sup>2</sup> Kohn does not even appear to be interested why the "liberal" government reforms, always incomplete and unsatisfactory, were usually followed by counter-reforms and what role Zemstvo liberalism played in this.

Autocracy, Nicholas II said unambiguously, had no intention of making the Zemstvo representatives' "senseless dream of taking part in the country's administration"<sup>3</sup> come true. Right up to the beginning of the "enlightened" twentieth century the Zemstvo could do nothing to get corporal punishment abolished in the Russian Empire, nor to obtain satisfaction of the demands raised by the Zemsky Sobor and of the liberals' demands for the freedom of speech, freedom of

<sup>1</sup> I. P. Belokonsky, *Zemstvo i konstitutsiya* (*Zemstvo and the Constitution*), Moscow, 1910, pp. 22, 83.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> I. P. Belokonsky, *Zemstvo i konstitutsiya*, p. 41.

the individual and the independence of courts. The Zemstvo members could not even toady in freedom. They were forbidden, for instance, to get together on a national scale and buy salt-cellar to present the traditional offering of bread and salt to Nicholas II on the occasion of his coronation in 1896.

Nevertheless, all this time Russia was advancing, and could not but advance, along the bourgeois path. But the main factor of her socio-political progress was not Kohn's "Western influence", nor Zemstvo or Cadet "patriotism". The main factor was the emergence and growth of new productive forces and the expansion of the class struggle. We should add that another reason for tsarist Russia's progress along the path of bourgeois development was imperialist rivalry in international affairs. "Besides," Lenin wrote, "the conditions of the world market confront Russia with the alternative of either being crushed by competitors among whom capitalism is advancing at a different rate and on a truly broad basis, or of getting rid of all the survivals of serfdom."<sup>1</sup>

Without pressure from below those "above" never undertook any social reforms. There is an indisputable link between Russian autocracy's first attempts to play at liberalism—the policy of Catherine II's "enlightened absolutism"—and mass unrest among the serfs and monastery peasants in the 1760s (although this, of course, was not the sole cause of "enlightened absolutism"). There was causal relation too between Paul I's decree on three-day corvée and the mass peasant unrest which hit more than thirty provinces in 1796-97. This also applied to the absence of any progress in the solution of the peasant issue under Alexander I and Nicholas I and the absence of an organised peasant movement in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, between Alexander II's liberal reforms and the growing peasant action in the 1850s and 1860s. But inasmuch as the peasant movement all through the nineteenth century was spontaneous, unorganised and powerless, inasmuch as neither the Decembrists nor the *raznochintsi* were in a position to lead it, and inasmuch as the struggle waged by the Russian proletariat and peasantry in 1905-07 ended in defeat, the root

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 597.

problems of Russia's bourgeois development set by the ruling classes remained essentially unsolved.

Kohn speaks of human weakness but does not say that the weakness of the Russian monarchs was the reverse side of strength—the strength of the material interests of the ruling class. Millions of dessiatines of landowners' fields tilled free by the peasants and uncontrolled domination of the bureaucratic state apparatus by the serf-owners—such were the real and tangible reasons which spoiled the “kind” tsars, caused their “regeneration”, impelled them to renounce their “good initial intentions”, dismiss the “wise” Speranskys and give rein to the “untalented” Arakcheyevs and Pobedonostsevs.

Compelled to carry out objectively bourgeois reforms, the autocratic state took good care of the interests of the landowners and the bureaucrats. It carried them out in a manner typical of serfdom, merely postponing the solution of urgent problems and thus paving the way for a still greater revolutionary movement. It was so in 1861, when the landowners carried out a “peasant reform” in serfdom manner. It was so in 1905, when the revolutionary onslaught compelled tsarism to publish its pseudo-constitutional manifesto of October 17. It was so in the years of Stolypin's agrarian reform. “Neither the latest step in the transformation of old tsarism into a renovated bourgeois monarchy,” Lenin pointed out, “nor the organisation of the nobility and the upper crust of the bourgeoisie on a national scale (the Third Duma), nor yet the bourgeois agrarian policy being enforced by the rural superintendents—none of these ‘extreme’ measures, none of these ‘latest’ efforts of tsarism in the *last* sphere remaining to it, the sphere of adaptation to bourgeois development, proves adequate. It just does not work!... Because the bourgeois-democratic tasks have been left unfulfilled, a revolutionary crisis is still inevitable.”<sup>1</sup>

The situation which finally evolved in Russia was peculiar indeed: it was the revolutionary proletariat and not the liberal bourgeoisie which assumed leadership in the struggle for bourgeois-democratic reforms. Although “stupid” tsarism infringed upon the interests of the bourgeoisie, it nevertheless

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 231.

protected it from "encroachments" by the proletariat, safeguarded its colonial interests and kept it supplied with war orders. What is more, the Russian bourgeoisie knew, from the developments in the West, that there was a mortal combat with the proletariat ahead.

The Russian proletariat developed politically much faster than the Russian bourgeoisie. Plekhanov's Emancipation of Labour group theoretically established Russian Social-Democracy as far back as 1883 and set out to draw up its political programme. The ideas of proletarian dictatorship and socialism were disseminated among the working masses in the 1890s by Lenin's League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class and at the beginning of the twentieth century by his *Iskra* (*The Spark*). A militant proletarian Marxist party of a new type was founded in 1903. Incidentally, in its rapid development, the Russian Social-Democratic movement owed quite a bit to the existence of Marxism in Western Europe. "We are not in the least afraid to say that we want to imitate the Erfurt Programme," Lenin wrote. "Imitating, however, must under no circumstances be simply copying. Imitation and borrowing are quite legitimate insofar as in Russia we see the same *basic* processes of the development of capitalism, the same *basic* tasks for the socialists and the working class; but they must not, under any circumstances, lead to our forgetting the *specific features* of Russia which must find *full expression* in the specific features of our programme. Running ahead somewhat, let us say here that among these specific features are, first, our political tasks and means of struggle; and, secondly, our struggle against all remnants of the patriarchal, pre-capitalist regime and the specific posing of the *peasant* question arising out of that struggle."<sup>1</sup>

As for the Russian bourgeois parties, they were behind with their development. "While the extremist forces of our country are organised, the liberally moderate nucleus of Russian society is still practically in its embryo," Struve's *Osvobozhdeniye* complained in 1902.<sup>2</sup> The bourgeois parties came into existence in the course of the bourgeois-democratic

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> *Osvobozhdeniye* No. 1, Stuttgart, June 18 (July 1), 1902, p. 5.

revolution which broke out in spite of them and in opposition to them. The Octobrists—the Right wing of the Russian bourgeoisie—openly went over to the counter-revolutionary camp after October 17, 1905. It took only two or three years for the “Left” Cadet Party fully to reveal its monarchist and counter-revolutionary countenance. In 1905-07, the Cadets still tried to play at revolution. Manoeuvring between autocracy and the people, they wanted to wrest reforms from tsarism and at the same time staked on its military might to stem the rising popular tide. What came of it was the repetition of the story of Zemstvo liberalism. Having suppressed the people, tsarism put the oppositional bourgeoisie “in its place”. Here is what Lenin wrote about it: “Tsarism consulted the bourgeoisie when the revolution still seemed to be a force; but it gradually applied its jackboot to kick out *all* the leaders of the bourgeoisie—first Muromtsev and Milyukov, then Heyden and Lvov, and, finally, Guchkov—as soon as the revolutionary pressure from below slackened.”<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the Russian counter-revolutionary liberalism of the twentieth century brought half-baked Zemstvo “neutrality” to its logical end. The ultimate political slogans of liberalism—“enemies from the Left” (Milyukov) and “better reaction than revolution” (Struve)—were graphic illustrations of the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie, which was insolubly linked with feudalism. Russian liberalism was bourgeois-landowner liberalism and remained so to the last. “The Russian landlords, from Purishkevich to Dolgorukov, have trained our liberal bourgeoisie in a spirit of servility, inertia, and fear of change unparalleled in history,” Lenin wrote.<sup>2</sup>

After the defeat of the 1905-07 revolution, the Cadets gave support to government policy and expressed readiness, as Milyukov declared during the visit of a Duma delegation to London in 1909, to remain “His Majesty’s Opposition and not in opposition to His Majesty”. The difference between Stolypin’s official policy of “renovating” Russia (first pacification and then reforms) and the progressist Cadet policy (reforms for pacification) lay in their being two tactics of one and the same policy that was to take Russia along the

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, pp. 255-56.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 416.

Western "Prussian Junker" path. In the conditions of growing revolutionary crisis it was only natural that both these tactics should be doomed to failure. The failure of the Cadet policy was not at all due to the lack of "parliamentary experience" in Russia. It was due to the absence of any grounds for bourgeois parliamentarism in the conditions of growing resistance from the masses. Stolypin's "pacification" multiplied and united the revolutionary forces, and no substantial reform was possible because it was apt to bring about a new revolutionary outburst. It was not for nothing that Lenin wrote I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov on December 2, 1909: "Struve, Guchkov and Stolypin are laying themselves all out to 'copulate' and beget a Bismarckian Russia, but nothing has come of it. Nothing has come of it. They are impotent."<sup>1</sup>

If instead of falsifying history Kohn devoted his efforts to studying the facts of history and party programmes, he would easily establish that there was definite kinship between the policy of autocratic bureaucracy and the policy of the liberals on all major political issues. The Russian liberals convincingly proved their affinity with tsarism by defending the principle of monarchism. Even Struve's *Osvobozhdeniye* from which Kohn proceeds in analysing the Cadet history, regarded it as practically useful from the historical and political point of view to leave monarchy intact after first freeing it from the "fetters of autocracy". It was to "save Russia" that Struve demanded that "Russian monarchy should be released from the fetters of autocracy".<sup>2</sup>

True, the Cadets decided it best to keep quiet about their monarchism when they met for their inaugural congress—the revolution in Russia was on the upswing. But the principle of monarchism appeared in the Cadet programme as soon as the first revolutionary wave had subsided. Kohn takes pains to explain to his readers the Russian meaning of "Cadets", but he has "forgotten" to throw light on an important moment: the name "Constitutional-Democrats" was "invented to conceal the *monarchist* nature of the party".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Sobraniye sochinenii* (Collected Works), Vol. 34, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> *Osvobozhdeniye* No. 20 (44), Stuttgart, March 19 (April 1), 1904, p. 345; No. 21 (45), April 2 (April 15), 1904, p. 363.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 488.

The Cadets displayed their affinity with autocracy on the agrarian question too—the main issue of the Russian bourgeois revolution—by formally and actually borrowing from the tsarist officials their programme of “compulsory alienation” of land. This programme differed from Stolypin’s plans in the ways the landowner class was to be saved: to quash the peasant revolution, the Cadets wanted to repeat 1861 by cutting land from landowners and giving it to peasants for a compensation. Stolypin wanted to prevent the peasant revolution without giving them any land but simply by creating on former communal lands a class of rich peasants—kulaks—which would be a new bulwark of tsarism and an ally of the big landowners.

The liberals also supported tsarism on the national question. *Osvobozhdeniye*, for instance, sought to prove that Finland had never thought of seceding from Russia—she was “too small and weak” for that. There was no question of Poland, it said, because she was divided among Germany, Austria and Russia, and there was “no sense at all in ten Vistula provinces forming a separate state”. Moreover, Russia “needs” Poland as an “allied buffer state”. He who knew the Baltic area, *Osvobozhdeniye* went on, knew that there could be no serious question of separatism there, while the peoples of the Caucasus naturally would not even think of seceding once a “constitutional system” was established in Russia”.<sup>1</sup> True, the Cadets’ Great-Power policy was later camouflaged by democratic verbalism, but the “reasonable concessions” to the outlying areas never included recognition of the full equality of the oppressed nations—the Russian bourgeoisie took no worse care of Great-Power interests than tsarism. “Indeed,” the Cadet newspaper *Rech* (*Speech*) admitted in 1913, “the Constitutional Democrats never undertook to defend the ‘right of nations to secede’ from the Russian state.”<sup>2</sup>

There was actually complete unanimity between Russian autocracy and Russian liberalism in foreign affairs. Lenin rightly pointed out that “in the sphere of foreign policy, the

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<sup>1</sup> *Osvobozhdeniye* No. 59, Paris, November 10 (October 28), 1904, pp. 147-48.

<sup>2</sup> *Rech*, 1913, No. 340.



Cadets have long been a government party" and that "Pan-Slavism—with the aid of which tsarist diplomacy has more than once carried out its grand political swindles—has become the official ideology of the Cadets".<sup>1</sup> And while in 1904 Struve started with "conventional patriotism" and promised to support the military efforts of tsarism, provided the autocratic system were "renovated", at the beginning of the First World War Milyukov unconditionally supported tsarism, promising not to "set any conditions or raise any demands" and declaring that the "achievement of our national tasks is on the right path".

"We are sure," he said, "that the fulfilment of the main of these tasks—acquisition of the Straits and Constantinople—will be ensured in due time both by diplomatic and military means."<sup>2</sup>

What the Cadet programme for the "liberation of Russia" actually meant and how it differed from the "tsar's concern" for the people was shown perfectly by the Cadet *Vekhi* (*Landmarks*) symposium. Referring to this important event, Hans Kohn does not waste words on its description. "The authors of *Vekhi*," he writes, "appealed for a new understanding of Russian history and opposed the lack of religion and patriotism among many of the revolutionary intellectuals."<sup>3</sup> And yet there is no doubt that *Vekhi* deserves the attention of a historian studying Russian liberalism.

The first edition of *Vekhi* appeared in May 1909 and the fifth before the year was out. This symposium—a veritable sign of the times—evoked a widespread reaction among all the classes and parties of Russia. A great deal was written about it. And that is quite understandable, for *Vekhi*—this "encyclopedia of liberal renegacy", to quote Lenin—not only summed up the history of Russian liberalism but formulated its ideological and political programme.

From the defeat of the 1905-07 revolution the *Vekhi* group drew the conclusion that the revolutions, generally speaking, were useless and "sinful", that any transformation

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> P. Milyukov, *Taktika Fraktsii Narodnoi Svobody vo vremya voyny* (*The Tactics of the People's Freedom Faction During the War*), St. Petersburg, 1916, pp. 6, 7, etc.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, pp. 84-85.

of the "earthly world" was practically a futile undertaking. The *Vekhi* diagnosis of Russia's ailment was that a "legion of devils . . . have entered the gigantic body of Russia", that she had been destroyed by revolutionism, atheism and materialism, and that she should be cured by religion, by the mysticism of Solovyov, Yurkevich and Dostoyevsky. The *Vekhi* group proposed to substitute the revolutionaries' "historical impatience" by the "discipline of obedience" and their heroism by "penitence" and "salutary Christian humility". They thus reinforced their base political alliance with the autocratic butchers by subscribing to their ideology. Religion became the ideological banner of the *Vekhi* group even before the outbreak of the Russian bourgeois revolution, and therein lay one of the distinctive traits of the ideology of the Russian liberal bourgeoisie which (unlike, say, the young French bourgeoisie) prayed in its youth to the same God as the tsar and the landowners, and received the Holy Communion from the same priest. Being economically dependent on the autocracy and toadying to it politically, the Russian bourgeoisie could not renounce the old ideology. And so there remained nothing for it but to patch up the tattered banner of religion.

The police autocratic regime was strangling everything progressive and the *Vekhi* group was urging the nation not to attribute the evil to the "superficies of human society" and not to seek to overcome "superficial disorder . . . by similarly superficial reforms". Millions of Russian workers and peasants were living in inhuman conditions and the *Vekhi* group was proclaiming that "self-improvement, self-knowledge and self-analysis of each individual" were essential for progress and proposing "individual self-concentration" as a means of salvation. Reaction was running wild and the *Vekhi* authors found nothing better than to put the blame for the repressions and executions on the revolutionaries, on the "irresponsibility", "maximalism" and "nihilism" of the younger generation "who were wrong to undertake serious dangerous social experiments and who, naturally, merely strengthened reaction by their activity". "We are not people, we are freaks," they shouted hysterically, passing off their own impotence for that of the entire Russian democratic movement.

"*Emancipation*" of mankind and renunciation of all means capable of bringing it freedom, "complete freedom of the individual" and retention of all conditions ensuring his enslavement—that was what *Vekhi* "freedom" amounted to—slavery in deeds, freedom in words. The *Vekhi* authors shouted about the need to do away with the "all-dominating love for the people and the proletariat", with the "idolisation of the people", with the "worship of man" and the "obscurantism of Narodism". They said: "It has been universally recognised that there is only one way to live well, and that is to live for the people, for society. . . . This demand has now been rejected." And at the same time they admitted something very few reactionaries in history dared admit. "Being what we are, we cannot even dream of uniting with the people. We should fear them more than we fear the executions ordered by the authorities and should bless this government which alone with its bayonets and prisons still protects us from popular fury."<sup>1</sup>

"This tirade is good," Lenin wrote, "because it is frank; it is useful because it reveals the truth about the real essence of the policy of the whole Constitutional-Democratic Party throughout the period 1905-09. . . . For in reality the Cadets collectively, as a party, as a social force, have pursued and are pursuing the policy of *Vekhi* and no other. The calls to take part in the elections to the Bulygin Duma in August and September 1905, the betrayal of the cause of democracy at the end of the same year, their persistent fear of the people and the popular movement and systematic opposition to the deputies of the workers and peasants in the first two Dumas, the voting for the budget, the speeches of Karaulov on religion and Berezovsky on the agrarian question in the Third Duma, the visit to London—these are only a few of the innumerable *landmarks* of just *that* policy which has been ideologically proclaimed in *Vekhi*."<sup>2</sup>

But the *Vekhi* authors would not have been true to themselves had they not matched their cynicism with hypocrisy,

<sup>1</sup> See *Vekhi*, "A Collection of Articles on the Russian Intelligentsia" by N. A. Berdayev, S. N. Bulgakov, M. O. Herschensohn, A. S. Izgoyev, B. A. Kistyakovsky, P. B. Struve and S. L. Frank, Moscow, 1909, pp. 2, 8, 9, 22, 36, 39, 53, 55, 68, 70, 89 and 95.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, pp. 130-31.

impudent frankness with Jesuitism, had they not compensated their self-flagellation and self-humiliation with self-admiration, had they not, being renegades by vocation, tried to ennoble every one of their evil deeds, to impart a "sublime" meaning to them. Wherever and whenever possible they tried to identify "freedom" and "reaction", Alexander Pushkin and Nicholas I. They launched most of their attacks on the democratic movement of the masses and claimed that they were opposed only to the "intelligentsia". They flung mud at democracy and at the same time proclaimed devotion to "truth", to all that was "fine" and "good". Their religious philosophy sanctioned Stolypin's pogroms and massacres, and they harped on their selfless Christian defence of the freedom of the individual, creation and culture. They tried to negate all the ways and means of emancipating the individual and at the same time accused the Russian democrats of "negating the individual", of "distorting the meaning of individual", of "having no proper theory about the individual". The *Vekhi* group were no simple defenders of reaction. They were the most subtle, the most educated defenders of the most brutal, the most primitive Black-Hundred reaction. And so it is not surprising that the Black-Hundreders hailed the "free creative" efforts of their new voluntary servitors with unfeigned enthusiasm.

The tsarist butchers and the priests highly appreciated the *Vekhi* group's servility. The entire reactionary press, from *Moskovskiy Vedomosti* (*Moscow Recorder*) down to the lowliest Black-Hundred sheets, approved of *Vekhi*. The Bishop of Volhynia, a notorious obscurantist, said *Vekhi* was a "treat" and a "feat". The "free" religious philosophers, who urged "neo-Christianity", thus received the blessings of the titled representatives of the official religion. "God-anointed" priests fraternised with "self-appointed" priests.

The Cadets tried to dissociate themselves from *Vekhi*. They put out a special symposium in which they "attacked" *Vekhi*. Milyukov, the Cadet leader, toured Russia with lectures "denouncing" his erstwhile brethren. But the Cadets "criticised" the *Vekhi* group solely for betraying their Cadet truth. That is why, citing the West-European bourgeoisie as an example, they taught the *Vekhi* group that there could be no frankness or sincerity in struggle and that if one did en-

gage in politics, one should treat politics as an art. Do not lay your cards on the table, the Cadets said. Remember that even Christ sometimes resorted to cunning. Pay particular attention to slogans, banners and formulas. You can and should break with the liberation movement, but why do it openly? Disavow Belinsky and Chernyshevsky but call them "bright beacons". Alliance with reaction is indispensable, but why admit it? Do your stuff but don't talk about it.<sup>1</sup>

"In my article I by-passed in silence many *Vekhi* arguments I could quite agree with," Milyukov admitted.<sup>2</sup> And Hessen, the former editor of *Rech*, recalled that he felt that *Vekhi* was planning for the future. At the same time, he wrote, "attacks on *Vekhi* should not be counteracted, for however much the contents of the symposium may be appreciated, it must be said that its appearance was premature".<sup>3</sup>

The Struves and the Berdayevs said "prematurely" what the Milyukovs and the Hessens had on their minds—and it was this sole moment over which the defenders of "people's freedom" had "split" ideologically.

Lenin immediately disclosed the real import and the hypocrisy of this "polemic" and showed that *Vekhi* expressed the essence of modern Cadetism and proved that the Cadet Party was a *Vekhi* party. Lenin understood the *Vekhi* ideology as something more than the mere views of the seven authors of the symposium. "The authors of *Vekhi* speak as real ideological leaders of a whole social trend."<sup>4</sup> The *Vekhi* ideology was the ideology of the counter-revolutionary liberal bourgeoisie, the "*Vekhi* mood" was a spirit of "dejection and recantation".<sup>5</sup> The liberals had a similar mood in the period of the first democratic upsurge in Russia (in the early 1860s)—it will suffice to recall the evolution of Kavelin and Katkov. This spirit prevailed among them in the period of the second democratic upsurge (in the late 1870s)—let us just recall Suvorin. "Katkov—Suvorin—the *Vekhi* group," Lenin wrote,

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<sup>1</sup> See *Intelligentsia v Rossii (Intelligentsia in Russia)*. St. Petersburg, 1910, pp. IV, 174-85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> I. V. Hessen, *V dvukh vekakh (Over Two Centuries. A Life Report)*, Berlin, 1937, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 41.

"are all historical stages of the turn taken by the Russian liberal bourgeoisie *from democracy* to the defence of reaction...."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's appraisal of the *Vekhi* movement was repudiated by the Cadet publicists. It is still disputed by many present-day bourgeois historians who make use of the duality of Cadet ideology. But Lenin's appraisal was repeatedly proved correct and confirmed by the class struggle in Russia, by the Cadets' activity at the time of their advent to power.

Kohn pays particular attention in his *Basic History of Modern Russia* to the period of government by the Russian bourgeois parties (March-October 1917). The Provisional Government proceeded "to establish complete freedom in Russia" immediately upon its inception, he affirms. The notorious Western influences at long last became the decisive factor of progress. "In those days," the Professor exclaims delightedly, "the growing penetration of Western ideas into Russia had helped the birth of the new reign of political liberty and democratic equality, the abolition of the traditional police regime, the confidence in the ability of the common man to think for himself and to help decide the life of the nation."<sup>2</sup> But, he added, for these liberties "the Russian masses cared not much more than Lenin". Their anti-Western sentiment and their inertia were taken advantage of by the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks engineered a "coup d'état", removed the "Westernisers"—the Cadets, the Social-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks—from the helm of government, and made Russia return to her old anti-West policy.

But let us forget Kohn's "history" for a moment and go back to the historical facts. The Professor definitely sins against the truth when he says that "no hand had come to its [tsarism's] help" when it was overthrown by the February Revolution. There were quite many such hands in Russia—the hands of the leaders of the bourgeoisie and the Cadets. Historical documents about their abortive attempts to save the monarchy were published a long time ago. What is more, the leaders of the Cadet Party frankly confessed to monarchism when they said that their sole idea and main concern

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 101.

during the stormy February days was to preserve the Romanov dynasty. Alone, without a monarch, the Provisional Government would be a "holey boat which will sink in the ocean of popular unrest", Cadet leader Milyukov wrote.

Kohn is not right either when he asserts that the Cadets "introduced democratic liberty in Russia". In February 1917 all the democratic liberties were seized by the insurgent people, not only without the consent of the Cadets but actually against their will. As for the Cadets and the petty-bourgeois conciliators, in the few months they were in power they did everything to stifle these liberties. This anti-democratic policy of the Russian bourgeoisie was not fortuitous: democratic liberties interfered with its imperialist foreign policy, hampered its conduct of the predatory war and prevented it from waxing rich on people's sufferings. True, in those spring March days the Cadet ministers and the Cadet newspapers did talk a lot about the "dawn of freedom", "new life" and the "ideals of the revolution", and paraded as "republicans" (after the failure to preserve the monarchy). But, as Milyukov later admitted, all this was merely a "forced concession to the exigencies of the moment", or, to be more exact, demagoguery to deceive the masses. "All we did was dissemble," Hessen echoed the Cadet leader. "I wrote about the 'great bloodless revolution' ... predicted the 'dawn of new life', and hailed the 'consciousness of the revolutionary army' without believing a single word. All this was just a lot of noise."<sup>1</sup> Would not Hans Kohn have done better to assess these significant admissions than prattle about the birth of the Cadet "reign of political liberty"?

Indeed, as we familiarise ourselves with the true history of the February Revolution we see that the Russian bourgeoisie, its parties and its leaders did not do much in the period the Provisional Government was in power to introduce liberties in Russia. On the contrary, they exerted every effort to root them out. The Russian bourgeoisie fought democracy and liberty with the hands of the "socialists" Tseretellis and Chernovs who sought to persuade the soldiers to fight and to dissuade the workers from attacking the rights of the capitalists and the peasants from seizing the

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<sup>1</sup> I. V. Hessen, *V dvukh vekakh* (Over Two Centuries), p. 356.

landed estates. The Russian bourgeoisie fought democracy with the hands of the capitalist saboteurs who sought to bring the working people to submission with the aid of famine and poverty. It fought democracy and liberty with the hands of the "Trudoviks"<sup>1</sup> Kerensky and Pereverzev who ordered the dispersal of workers' demonstrations and spread the vile lie that the Bolsheviks had been bribed by the German General Staff. It fought the revolution with the hands of tsarist Generals Krymov and Kornilov who sought to "normalise" the situation in the rear and at the front by instituting the death penalty.

In the short time they were in power, the bourgeois parties did not solve a single one of the urgent problems confronting the bourgeois revolution, nor satisfy any of the people's demands—for peace, bread, the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. This fact is so well known and so indisputable that even such an admirer of Cadetism as Hans Kohn should have dwelt on it in his *Basic History*. But all he does is copy the Cadet speeches of those days. Before demanding peace, he says, the masses should have routed the Germans and repeated the "astonishing victories at Valmy". The conditions for the implementation of other tasks were lacking and, what is more, it "demanded time".<sup>2</sup> The electoral law and voting procedures for the Constituent Assembly "had to be elaborated"—and this was an extremely complicated job in war-time. Land reform, in Kohn's opinion, "was in itself a complex business and had become even more complex under the conditions of war".<sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, the Russian bourgeois politicians never intended to solve all these problems. They resorted to thousands of tricks and advanced thousands of reasons to justify their inaction. On the eve of the February Revolution, the Russian bourgeoisie, seeking to continue the war, raised a slogan demanding a "strong government" and "military

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<sup>1</sup> *Trudoviks*—a group of petty-bourgeois democrats in the State Duma consisting of peasants and intellectuals of a Narodnik trend. The Trudovik group was formed in April 1906 of peasant deputies to the First Duma. In the Duma the Trudoviks vacillated between the Cadets and the Social-Democrats.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



dictatorship". It was with the same aim in view that it later sought to "bridle" the victorious people. The solution of all problems of vital importance for the peasants, the workers and the soldiers was postponed by the bourgeois parties pending the "convocation of the Constituent Assembly", and the convocation of the Assembly was postponed *sine die*, or rather until the time the bourgeoisie considered itself strong enough to quash the democratic movement of the masses. First "normalisation" of the situation (with the aid of bullets and bayonets) and then solution (naturally to the advantage of the "normalisers") of all urgent problems—such was the "positive programme" advanced after the February Revolution by the Cadet Party, backed in those days by the whole of the bourgeoisie and monarchist reaction. Revolution and democracy meant "anarchy" and "disorder", counter-revolution and reaction meant "law" and "order"—this allegation of all counter-revolutionaries was used by the Russian bourgeoisie to carry out the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Imperialist foreign policy and restorationist domestic policy were what the Cadet Party inherited from monarchism on its demise in 1917, and this "inheritance" played a fatal role in the history of Russian liberalism. In the conditions prevailing after the people had acquired democratic freedoms, reactionary policy soon led to the bankruptcy and self-exposure of both the party of "people's freedom" (the Cadets) and the Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik conciliators associated with it. Attempts to strangle the revolution failed. The bourgeois "reign" in Russia lasted only a few months but this was enough for the people to become completely disillusioned about the democratism of the party of "people's freedom" and its Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik accomplices.

As for the "free West", in those fatal days for Russian liberalism it thought only of one thing: to keep the Russian armies fighting on the Allied side. And so it did everything to get Russian reaction to "normalise" the situation in the country. Kohn keeps harping on the West's beneficent influence on Russia in 1917. What West? What Russia? Was it the West which dreamed of subjugating Russia, which had seized the key positions in the Russian economy and for

which the proletariat, the people of Russia, had first been exceedingly cheap manpower and then become just as cheap cannon-fodder? It is useless to expect Kohn to answer these questions.

The Great October Socialist Revolution put an end to bourgeois rule, and from the very first the Cadet Party was the main organiser of civil war. The Russian bourgeoisie had close ties with the bourgeoisie abroad, and its politicians immediately made use of these international ties to engineer plots against the Soviet Government and pave the way for armed intervention against Russia in 1918-20. The Russian bourgeoisie had blood ties with the monarchist Black-Hundreds, the bourgeois politicians and businessmen had established direct contact with the tsar's generals during the war, and these internal ties were immediately made use of to organise a Cossack Vendée and raise whiteguard forces. The Russian bourgeoisie and its politicians had almost eight months of experience in "coalescing" and "co-operating" with the parties of "socialist" conciliators. In the cases where the counter-revolutionary Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were still "shy" of openly collaborating with the monarchist Black-Hundreds, contact was maintained through the Cadet "intermediaries". It was these factors which, in the early months following the October Revolution, made the Cadet Party the political leader of all the counter-revolutionary forces in the country and organiser of the coup which was destined to return the country not only to the pre-October days but even to the pre-February path.

True, the Cadets did not remain long at the helm of the counter-revolution. As soon as the monarchist whiteguards felt they had become strong enough, they reverted to the old traditional forms in their alliance with bourgeois reaction. The dictatorial generals were bosses in everything while the Cadet leaders hung about in the rear of the White armies, organising, as M. N. Pokrovsky aptly put it, "diverse pretentious councils and conferences which no one consulted and governments which did not govern anything".<sup>1</sup>

Frankly speaking, the Cadets could not very well com-

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<sup>1</sup> M. I. Pokrovsky, *Burzhuziia v Rossii (The Bourgeoisie of Russia)*, *Big Soviet Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8, Moscow, 1927, p. 193.

plain of such an alignment of forces. First, they simply had no choice and, secondly, the Russian bourgeois politicians were accustomed to such an alignment. And the "liberals" did not complain. They served loyally Denikin and Kolchak, Yudenich and Wrangel, paraded as their "ministers" and "ambassadors", allowed their "democratic" names to be used as cover for the most bloody regimes and the vilest of crimes.

As for *Vekhi* ideology, in those years it not only did not lag behind this "liberal" practice but was in certain respects even ahead of it. This fact is documentally proved by *De Profundis*, a symposium in which most of the *Vekhi* authors took part, and especially by Berdayev's *Filosofiya Neravenstva* (*Philosophy of Inequality*), written in 1918. "De profundis" are the first words of the psalm "Out of the Depths Have I Cried unto Thee, O Lord". What did the *Vekhi* group cry for after they had fallen deep into apostasy?

The two main themes inherent in *Vekhi* ideology reveal themselves especially vividly in these two works: reliance only on the "spirit" and reliance only on brute material force, on heavenly power and earthly power, on God and the tsar. Both are illustrative of the social death of the last exploiting class in history. The first is actually recognition by the Russian bourgeoisie of its impotence, realisation that it is doomed, that it has reached the end of its earthly journey. The second is the refusal to believe this, the expression of a desire to regain everything. It passes its own death for the death of Russia and the whole world, and its pathological fear of going out of existence is matched by no less pathological and fierce hatred of the revolution. Religion sanctions violence both against other nations and against the Russian people. The *Vekhi* authors themselves urge suppression of the rebellious "rabble". They no longer pretend to be "progressists", they oppose the "sunshine theories of progress and the perfect society of the future", and declare that "social day-dreaming is depravity". They no longer write about spiritual independence but sing of the "delights of submission" to the tsar and the priest and stress the "intolerance of submission to our equals and our inferiors". They no longer turn away from the monarchists' embraces and they affirm that without the tsar "Russia has fallen apart and become a heap of rubbish"! They no longer flirt with democracy but shout

of their "horror" of it and say the people's autocracy is "the most dreadful of all autocracies". Struve is against the very use of the word "democracy". Berdayev proclaims it a "disease" which has infected the people; he now renounces the value of liberalism (liberalism, it turns out, is not sufficiently conservative and paves the path to democracy), he prefers "the old tyranny with the stakes of the Inquisition" to democratic public opinion, he eulogises "creative reaction" and proclaims as "Biblically beneficent" the actions undertaken by the "tsarist butchers" against the insurgent people.

Such are these "defenders of freedom", these "victims of communist totalitarianism". "Pure philosophy" turns out to be linked with the dirtiest politics. "Cultured philosophers" collaborate with whiteguard hangmen. The advocates of "spiritual means only", the "refined and noble people" virtually shriek with fury, demanding "extermination of infection". The defenders of the individual see profound meaning in the annihilation of millions of people. They quote Dostoyevsky hundreds of times for the statement that innocent children should not be allowed to shed a single tear and at the same time sing of oceans of blood and tears. Let us recall what these "freedom-lovers" and "philanthropists" wrote in the years of the revolution and the civil war. Imperialism, Berdayev's *Filosofiya Neravenstva* proclaims, is "one of the world's eternal systems.... The contest of contemporary 'bourgeois' imperialist wills has a sort of sublime, mystic meaning.... By their nature, imperialist wars are nevertheless greater than social wars.... It is madness to fight for sensible aims and highly 'sensible' to fight for insensate aims.... One cannot fight 'for land and freedom'.... It is good to fight... for one's 'faith, tsar and country'.... Since the creation of the world the minority, and not the majority, has always ruled and will always rule.... The existence of 'blue blood' is not only a class prejudice, it is also an indisputable and indestructible anthropological fact.... What takes place in war is a sort of natural selection of extremely potent ideas.... And God gives His people the freedom [here it is, the Cadet freedom!] to take part in such a contest...." The *Vekhi* members curse the Bolsheviks for putting an end to the sanguinary war: "You have wrecked God's plans for Russia" (and how many people were to be exterminated

according to these "plans"?). "Soldiers are not killers," Berdayev proclaimed in those years. "All that is heroic in history is linked with wars... War, if waged in proper spirit, elevates and ennobles man. Your fear of physical violence is due to your uninspired attitude to life, to your profound belief in the material world."<sup>1</sup> Fascist in content and form is the only name one can give these beastly conceptions.

Many books by the *Vekhi* authors have been republished of late in the countries of the "free West", but *Vekhi*, *De Profundis* and *Filosofiya Neravenstva* are not among them. Nor do the essays of our Professor contain any excerpts from these "creations". And that is no accident. Simple republication of these books and reproduction of their "slogans" would kill the legend built up abroad about the *Vekhi* authors being defenders of freedom, about their being Christian lambs victimised by the Bolshevik Extraordinary Commission. Renunciation not only of democracy but liberalism, panegyrisation of imperialism and war, unrestrained nationalism, justification of the violent forms and means of suppressing the people—all this shows once again *where* Russian *Vekhi* liberalism, which had allied itself with monarchist reaction, was leading Russia.

The socialist revolution did more than just save Russia from the restoration of the old monarchist regime. It prevented the development of the fascist trends which inevitably arise among the imperialist bourgeoisie when its struggle with the proletariat becomes sharper.<sup>2</sup>

As far as such an "accidental event" as the imperialist

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<sup>1</sup> N. A. Berdayev, *Filosofiya neravenstva. Pisma k nedrugam po sotsialnoi filosofii* (*Philosophy of Inequality. Letters to the Opponents of Social Philosophy*), Berlin, 1923, pp. 1, 8, 19, 26, 42, 50, 60, 62, 63, 103, 111, 113, 120, 137, 143, 192, 193, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The trends which later became universally known as fascist came into existence long before they had become predominant in Italy, Germany and Japan in the 1930s. They also existed in Russia, before the victory of the proletarian revolution. What did all these countries have in common? The combination of the most "advanced" bourgeois imperialism and tenacious feudal survivals, the merger of "contemporary" reaction with medieval reaction, the large-scale proletarian movement which drove the bourgeoisie to the Right, to employ the most brutal methods of coercion. Fascist trends manifest themselves, in one way or another, in all imperialist countries. In some, they assume different forms as they develop—for instance, McCarthyism in the United States.

war is concerned, it merely hastened the inevitable collapse of Russian bourgeois-landowner liberalism. It did not bring victory to the Bolsheviks because the "unenlightened" Russian people developed hatred of the West and fell for "anti-West agitation", but because war helped finally to enlighten the masses. Incidentally, the whole of the modern history of the West and the East shows—as Kohn can easily convince himself—how wars which bring incalculable calamities in their wake invariably enlighten the oppressed classes to the detriment of the interests of those who engineer them.

No one could foresee the Sarajevo assassination of June 28, 1914, and that it would serve as a pretext for a world war, but this "accidental war" had been foreseen thirty or forty years before that by Marx and Engels, and the Russian Bolsheviks and the revolutionary Marxists of all countries had prepared for this "surprise" in advance. And now, fifty years later, there appears a "great" sociologist who moralises on the vicissitudes of life. Marx, of course, is too "obsolete" and his own "sociology" is a modern science!

### **Basic History of Russia Without a Basis**

Let us sum up. Kohn's "basic" history of Russia is a history without a real basis and his "mind" of Russia does not even smell Russian. The factors the Professor undertook to analyse—national traditions, external influences, the role of the individual, historical contingencies—deserve the attention they get from historical science and are objects of research. But Kohn brilliantly confirmed the truth that it was absolutely impossible to understand the concrete manifestations of the more general and more profound laws of historical development if one analysed the particular separately from the general, the form separately from the content, contingency separately from objective necessity, ideological influences separately from material grounds, the individual separately from the classes, and the classes separately from the social bases of their activity.

The real content of modern and contemporary history lies in the substitution of the feudal system by capitalism and of capitalism by socialism.

This general law of historical development was only half-recognised in the Kohn studies under review, for he asserted that the spread of "Western liberalism" (bourgeois relationships) throughout the world was both necessary and inevitable. It was this original stand of his which impelled him to "end" the history of Russia in 1917, to cancel out the right to "contemporary history" of all the Eastern countries which have embarked on the path of socialist development in the past few decades.

But faithlessness to the principle of historicism was not confined to the cancelling out of the history of socialist Russia. Transition from feudalism to capitalism proceeded in different ways and different conditions and that, too, is something the Professor, who depicts the history of all countries and nations as progress along the English lines, does not want to recognise.

What distinguished Russia's historical development was that bourgeois transformation—not only in the latter half of the nineteenth century but at the beginning of this century too—was implemented by the autocratic and not bourgeois state, by the ruling feudal landowners and not the bourgeoisie. In those days, there were three leading political forces in the Russian political arena: the camp of autocracy and serfdom, the camp of landowner-bourgeois liberalism, and the camp of peasant and later proletarian and peasant democracy. This division into three main political camps became typical of Russia after the split of the democratic and liberal elements in the anti-feudal movement. There were definite signs of this division in the middle of the nineteenth century, Lenin wrote. It acquired a growingly distinct shape in the period 1861-1904, rose to the surface and became fixed in the open arena of the struggle of the masses in 1905-07, remaining unchanged in the 1908-12 period. "Why is this division valid to this day?" he asked. "Because the objective problems of Russia's historical development—problems which have always and everywhere, from France in 1789 to China in 1911, formed the content of democratic change and democratic revolutions—have as yet not been solved."<sup>1</sup>

The Russian bourgeoisie, however, was not fated by the

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 501.

new conditions to play a leading role in the solution of the problems of bourgeois-democratic revolution which are *common* to all countries, and therein lies the *difference* between the young Russia and the old bourgeois countries. In the face of two interlinked social wars—the struggle going on between the feudals and the peasants and the impending struggle between the proletariat and the capitalists—the Russian bourgeoisie was compelled by the logic of struggle to rely on the forces of the old world, to betray the interests of the peasants. The antagonism between the reactionary feudal and the liberal bourgeois gave way to their common, deeper antagonism to democracy in general, both proletarian and peasant. That is why the camp of landowner and bourgeois liberals sided with serfdom and betrayed the people's interests every time the class struggle became sharper. Advocating bourgeois transformations for Russia, this camp was driving the country along the Prussian, not American, path, along the path leading to the merger of capitalism with serfdom and monarchy.

The Russian bourgeois parties always and everywhere relied on the forces already doomed by history and thereby doomed themselves to extinction. Their independent existence, when the developments forced them to come out to the people and when they openly betrayed the people, lasted only eight months (from February to October 1917). The rest of their days they spent rotting in the rear of the White armies. Rejected by the people and thrown out of their country, they ended their inglorious life abroad.

That is why the Russian bourgeoisie's history was the shortest and the most disgraceful, without a single victory but with very many betrayals and defeats. While the bourgeoisie of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries accomplished great revolutions, the Russian bourgeoisie merely staged a vulgar farce, in which Cromwell's role was played by Petrunkevich, the "great" Zemstvo leader, the roles of Washington and Robespierre by the lackeys Struve, Guchkov and Milyukov, who had begged for a constitution in the tsarist ante-chambers and later served the tsarist generals, and the roles of Voltaire and Helvétius by Anthony, the obscurantist Bishop of Volhynia, and by the "free thinkers" Berdayev and Bulgakov.



Conversely, the same logic of class struggle compelled the Russian proletariat to seek alliance with the peasants to fight for the overthrow of absolutism, to turn the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution, to oppose most resolutely the autocratic regime and to expose Russian liberalism, at first powerless and conciliatory and then patently counter-revolutionary.

The Bolsheviks won in Russia not because they knew how to organise "plots" or because their skilful "demagogy" played on the instincts of the "unenlightened" masses, as the Professor affirms in his essays (incidentally, if anybody was an adept at plotting and demagogy it was the short-lived Russian Cadetism). The Bolsheviks' victory was due to their ability to satisfy the vital interests of the masses—their ability to lead the masses in the struggle against exploitation, for land, peace and freedom.

An objective historical study always reflects more or less deeply and reproduces the logic development of the object. Falsification of history also has its logic, the logic of the falsification of the object. Mixing up all the factors dividing and uniting the class forces which determined Russia's path and dissociating from autocracy the counter-revolutionary liberalism which was always attracted to it and instead of that "linking" with autocracy the proletarian democracy which always opposed it, Kohn naturally ended up by distorting the whole history and nature of both the Russian democracy represented by the Bolsheviks and the Russian liberalism represented by the Cadets. After Kohn had got through with it all, the counter-revolutionary liberalism which gravitated towards the monarchy and fascism became a fighter for freedom and the revolutionary proletarian democracy was identified with Nechayevism, which distorted the aims and means of revolutionary struggle, and was simultaneously proclaimed an "heir" of tsarism.

### **In the Professor's Kitchen**

When history does not fit into the historian's Procrustean bed of schemes and conceptions, he must either abandon these schemes or adjust the facts to the scheme, that is, elaborate

methods which, instead of elucidating the truth, will enable him to distort or ignore it. That is where we enter the Professor's kitchen. *What* Kohn seeks to prove and *how* he does it tally completely. The former predetermines the latter. If cognition is a process leading from ignorance to knowledge, to deeper knowledge, then Kohn knows the "conclusions" beforehand, and the whole task before him is to create a semblance of this process, an illusion of evidence.

For instance, why is it that Britain's history shaped thus and not thus and why was it the embodiment of "liberal" and not other principles? Hans Kohn gives an exhausting and didactic answer: because such is the English national mind, the "idée-force" that is specifically English. What is the task before a student of British history? To discover the personalities who expounded this "idea" and enumerate the events in the course of which it was implemented. Why is it that the history of many other countries, Russia among them, reveals deviations from the classical English pattern? That is due to the Eastern "mind" and various "contingencies". Everything would have been right if Russia had leaders like X instead of Y. And what is one to do if the leaders like X and Y did not say and do what they should do according to Kohn's "theory"? Well, one must simply delete the "unsuitable" parts from their speeches and throw out the "objectionable" moments from their biographies, and everything will be right. Moreover, it is desirable to make certain reservations to the effect that it is only "natural" that there are other factors besides the national mind. The "theory" will then have been thoroughly synthesised. And if it is, moreover, possible to "prove" that the given country turned East or West by boldly citing a geographical example (Russia's capital was transferred to *eastern* Moscow in 1918; Bonn, "a city on the *Western* bank of the Rhine", became the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949), then nothing will touch this "theory" as far as "validity" is concerned.

Is there anything more complex than the live social organism and anything more superficial and primitive than Kohn's "sociology", which is destined to explain the development of this organism? First of all, this "sociology" is incapable of satisfying the curiosity of any thinking person, to say nothing of serious scholars. The pages of Kohn's books reek

with incredible mustiness, decay and squalor. His explanations of the causes of phenomena remind one of the explanations of the medieval scholastics who said that heat was caused by caloric, that combustion was caused by phlogiston, that the growth of plants was caused by the "plant" soul and that of animals by the "animal" soul, etc. But what now is not recognised as science by any physicist, chemist or biologist passes off quite well in bourgeois social "science" as the last word in sociology. As if not only there never was any Marx but no achievements in bourgeois historiography even by such people as Guizot, Thierry and Mignet either.

In Kohn's books, idealism in methodology is harmoniously supplemented by falsification. And that is quite logical. For a lie alone can "substantiate" a lie.

Prof. Kohn's methodology may justly be called a methodology of ellipses. Ellipses are the most graphic symbol of doctored material and ignored and distorted facts, the symbol of their unseemly and one-sided reflection. In Hans Kohn's works "three dots" stand for the analysis of socio-economic processes, "three dots" are substituted for the political history of Russian liberalism and Russian democracy, the same "three dots" stand for the forty years of the country's development, "three dots" replace "objectionable" places in the cited works, and it is actually the traditional "three dots" which underlie the whole of Kohn's method of "comparative analysis", all his brilliant analogies.

The truly amazing simplicity of Kohn's methodology explains his unusual productivity: in the past few years the Professor has virtually flooded the "Western" book marts with his essays on the nationalism of France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Switzerland, the United States, the Middle East, the Far East and other Afro-Asian areas. After the publication of his books, historians do not have to spend much time studying the history of their own and other countries. Hans Kohn has not only done their work for them but has supplied them with a truly universal "methodology".

Kohn's analysis of the minds of other nations amounts to selecting a suitable epigraph, recopying from an earlier book his theory concerning the "two forms" of nationalism, and then "substantiating" it with a few dozen hastily selected facts and distorted quotations divided into those "pro-West"

and those "pro-East". It does not matter if in his haste the Professor mixes up names, dates and statistical data,<sup>1</sup> the jacket of his next "epoch-making" book will nevertheless claim that it is "one of the great accomplishments of our time", that it is "a key to the modern history of Russia" (or Germany, Switzerland or any other country).

We should finally give credit to the reviewers of Kohn's books—in a way they are right when they say that these books transcend the bounds of ordinary academic life. These books indeed have very little in common with science. Kohn does not analyse history, he cuts it into ribbons; he does not sum up the material, he adapts it to his scheme; he does not illustrate the processes which took place, he plays the dirty little game of raking up negative examples. History as such does not interest Kohn or, rather, it does not suit him, for history marches on whether he wants it or not.

We entered the laboratory of the "great American sociologist" with trepidation, expecting to find the precise instruments with which he penetrates into the essence of deep-going processes and unwounds the most complex skein of historical developments. But, on closer scrutiny, we saw that there was only one instrument there, and a simple one. Kohn's admirers called it a "key" to the modern history of Russia. It would be far more correct to call it a "master key". Kohn is really quite an expert in handling it.

### **The Role of Providence in Kohn's Historical Conception**

When one reads Kohn's historical essays one cannot help feeling that he does not say everything he should, that something is missing. Indeed, if the objective law of social development disappears and its place is taken by the "national mind" (which just cannot be grasped) and "contingency"

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<sup>1</sup> In *Basic History of Modern Russia*, Kohn confuses the chemist Mendeleyev and the biologist Mechnikov (p. 34); he affirms that Engels died in 1892, and not in 1895 (p. 55); on page 74 he says Russia produced 360 million tons of coal in 1913 and on page 53—40 million, and so on and so forth.

(which just cannot be foreseen), then does not this elusive national mind become mystic? Is not this contingency deified? All that lacks to make Kohn's historical picture complete is God. But it is enough to scrutinise his works from a definite angle—to see if there is any place for God in his conception—to convince oneself that there is such a place and that it is occupied. Kohn's "conceptions" repose not only upon the "national mind", "contingency" and ellipses but on religion too. God helped Kohn foresee the future of Russia in his earlier books, to God Kohn turned in the Second World War years, and to God Kohn leaves the last and decisive word in explaining history in his post-war works.<sup>1</sup>

One of the distinguishing traits of sociology is its ability to understand the past and the present, and also to foresee the future. The distinguishing feature of anti-scientific ideology is the inability to explain the present, the past and, all the more so, the future. Marx regarded the development of society as an inevitable natural and historical process. As far as Kohn is concerned, social development is a mystic process. This "coryphaeus", who has wrought a "revolution" in world historiography, admits that "today, in the uncertainties and confusion of the aftermath of the two great wars, Europe scans the horizon of the future more anxiously than ever before. The continent which guards vigilantly its vitality of spirit and its heritage of freedom, has no cause for despair: 'Many are the shapes of the divine [he quotes Euripides]; many things the gods accomplish beyond hope; and often the expected is not fulfilled, but a god finds a path unexpected by us' ".<sup>2</sup>

And here is another analogous admission from one of Kohn's latest works:

"Man proposes, God disposes—history is a process influenced by forces beyond man's grasp."<sup>3</sup>

Here you find the inability to understand the past and definite lack of confidence in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> See Kohn's *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, Leipzig, 1923, pp. 97-98, and *World Order in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1942, pp. 282-83, etc.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Prophets and People*, New York, 1946, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *Reflections on Modern History. The Historian and Human Responsibilities*, New York, 1963, p. 11.

"God=*nescio* [I do not know]," Engels wrote, "but *ignorantia non est argumentum* [ignorance is not an argument]."<sup>1</sup> Ignorance can be an argument only in one instance—when it is in favour of knowledge. When man is not in a position to explain things by themselves or when he lacks courage to say, "I do not know, but I will learn," then this ignorance is usually garbed in religious and idealistic vestments and made to assume the semblance of thorough knowledge, the illusion of exhaustive explanation. In actual fact, however, it is indolence and weariness, sterility and cowardice of mind. Religion, like idealism, is essentially an expression and admission of the inability to explain Nature and history scientifically.

And so self-denying, untiring aspiration to truth gives way to soothing, lulling lies, the inexhaustible thirst for knowledge turns into a sort of gratifying satiety: it is enough to chew religious gum not to feel hungry. Instead of painstakingly amassing facts, instead of thoroughly analysing them, an easy explanation is thought up: "I do not know. People do not know. But God—He knows everything." The proud consciousness of one's power—the power of intellect, the power of knowledge—gives way to hysterical lamentations: "The ways of Providence are inscrutable" and "God finds a path unexpected by us". Words and phrases replace objective knowledge. "Mind", "idea" and "contingency" take the place of historical laws. But these are not simple words and phrases. From these words and phrases it is only one step to belief in God. Under the cover of these words and phrases science is substituted by religion.

One must admit, however, that Kohn does not frequently appeal to God directly in his books. Kohn is rather shy, or rather afraid, to call his sociology theological. He has not lost hope of going to Heaven, but for the time being he wants to enjoy earthly blessings. He knows very well that faith and knowledge are incompatible, that there is no place for religious fanatics in the science of the twentieth century, but he wants very much to remain "one of the leading historians of today". By its very essence, however, Kohn's sociology is theological. And although he prefers to talk about "ideas",

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<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Moscow, 1964, p. 204.

"minds" and "contingencies", he nevertheless crosses himself now and then, just to make sure.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," says one of the Biblical commandments. But how is one to juxtapose this commandment and the unseemly doings of our God-fearing professor, how is one to juxtapose God and "three dots"? Theologians, it is quite possible, will say that to err is only human and that not only Kohn but even Jesus Christ paltered for the sake of "sublime truth".

From our viewpoint, there is no contradiction here. Faith and knowledge, religion and the truth are indeed incompatible. Many religious people did and do useful things, champion peace, promote science, fight for the truth and justice, but they do all this in contravention of their religiousness, in despite of it—even if they themselves do not admit it, and Kohn, as we shall see below, was once one of them. *In their substance, however, religion and lies, faith and ignorance are quite compatible. What is more, they are the same things. Religion is ignorance passed off for absolute knowledge, an untruth "elevated" to the level of world outlook, a lie in its highest degree.*

Can there be any contradiction between a small lie and a big lie? With his inherent primitivity Kohn reveals that they are identical. Although he believes that Providence will ultimately intervene in the "uncertainties" and "confusion" of life on earth, he is not averse, being a practical man, to "revise" history with the aid of "three dots". To paraphrase the saying, God helps those who help themselves.

## Chapter III

### A FEW PROOFS OF KOHN'S LIES

#### John Somerville vs. Hans Kohn

There have been protests against the anti-scientific analysis of Russian history abroad too. They are not numerous, it is true, but that makes it all the more important to dwell on them.

Let us take the review of *The Mind of Modern Russia* by John Somerville, a progressive American philosopher, in *The American Slavic and East European Review* in 1956.<sup>1</sup>

Somerville rightly says that the unusually brief excerpts quoted by Kohn are not enough to constitute an adequate introduction to the primary sources. He next enumerates the following "pre-conceptions or polemical premises" from which Kohn proceeded in his commentaries: "He considers, first, that Russia's only worthwhile path of cultural flowering lies in 'integration' with the West; second, that this integration should take place in terms of an acceptance of the values of 'liberalism', third, that this liberalism depends mainly on the 'middle class' which, of course, is hardly possible without a capitalist system."

Somerville ironically points out that "this approach often serves to give a certain nostalgic quality to the general treatment into which, occasionally, large-scale polemical distortions of important matters unfortunately make their appearance". That is why "at times, it is hard to resist the feeling

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<sup>1</sup> *The American Slavic and East European Review*, October 1956, pp. 416-19.



that history has passed the editor by, but that he has faith in some sort of programme which, he is still confident, will bring it around again to the right track". Since Kohn evidently wishes to tie his conclusions more closely to the study materials, Somerville continues, he has a hard row to hoe. The stubborn historical fact is that a "strong middle class" never did develop in Russia and that a vast majority of Westernisers showed no partiality whatever for capitalism but were explicitly against it and in favour of socialism and communism. All this gives Kohn's efforts to identify his views with those of the Russian Westernisers a "somewhat unrealistic air". A student of Russian history will not get a realistic view even of Herzen, whom Kohn considers a like-minded person, forgetting that Herzen never shared his sympathies for liberalism or for capitalism, and the "difficulty in regard to the Marxists reaches maximum proportions". They are presented as if they were convinced opponents of the Westernisers, whereas they were life-long defenders of the basic stream of thought represented by Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky and Plekhanov. Moreover, Somerville writes, to maintain Kohn's thesis is either to deny that the Bolsheviks were disciples of Marx and Engels, or to deny that Marx and Engels come from the West, "which would be obvious nonsense".

The editors, Somerville goes on, ridiculing Kohn's historical analogies, seem to imagine that Lenin, like Dostoyevsky, turned to Asia in the struggle against Europe, that they "had in view the same Asia, the same 'allies' and the same enemy. To be sure, they both dealt with Asia (they dealt with everything), but they made opposite choices, had opposite values, and entertained opposite expectations in regard to Asia".

"To suggest that because Lenin was convinced things would turn out well for him in the East, he was 'anti-Western', which is consistently done in this work, ignores the fact that Lenin was equally convinced things would turn out well for him in the West," Somerville concludes. "In his view, it was not East against West. It was class against class, and the two contending classes were both present in the East, as they were both present in the West . . . and it was, of course, in the West, not the East, that he found his teacher and message. . . . Unfortunately, the average student who

needs a source book of this kind is not in a position to appreciate that the editor's introductory material in so many instances reflects his subjective and rather strained value judgments instead of the textual content and historical influences normally treated."

Somerville has also done quite a bit to expose the slanderous charges levelled against the Communists, charges which have been raised a great deal in the United States in recent years. "Very few people in the United States," he writes in "Some Problems Concerning the Concept of Revolution in the Development of American Philosophy", "have any accurate idea of the actual content of Marxist-Leninist doctrines. At present in all the mass media—the screen, radio, television, the daily and weekly press—as well as in the great majority of schools and institutions of higher learning, and in churches, the Communist is pictured as an unprincipled person eager and ready to use force and violence on any occasion, as a terrorist who gives no thought to the welfare of the majority, or to improving the lot of the majority, as a secret conspirator working to bring the world under the domination of the Soviet Union. This is the impression in the minds of the majority of American students, although it is clearly not based on knowledge of the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism.... The concept of a minority revolution, a revolution lacking the support of the majority, has always been rejected by Marxism.... In a variety of Marxist works, especially in those of Lenin, it is emphasised that majority support is a precondition of any socialist revolution. This is well known to anyone who makes a serious study of Marxism-Leninism."

Somerville's pronouncements are typical of his way of thinking. His philosophical views, which may in much be disputed from the Marxist angle, are on the whole bound with the idea concerning the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems and opposed to the ideology of the cold war, of which Hans Kohn is a proponent. "I do not know whether ignorance can be called a force, but it is certainly the breeding ground of dangerous forces," he writes. "... There will never be even the possibility of a normal attitude on the part of our people until they receive as much responsible information and instruction about Russia—its

history, philosophy, literature, language, institutions and culture, as they do about France or Germany.... Whatever the specific nature of our problems might be at any given time, the greatest thing we have to fear about Russia is ignorance of Russia."<sup>1</sup>

That is why Somerville has come out against Kohn who takes advantage of the fact that his readers are uninformed to sow ignorance and prejudice among them.<sup>2</sup> One cannot but be sorry that Somerville's review was a lone voice in the chorus of apologist reviewers.

### Frederick Schuman vs. Hans Kohn

A good idea of Kohn's prejudice may be obtained by comparing his works with *Russia Since 1917* by the American bourgeois historian Frederick L. Schuman.<sup>3</sup>

He is a colleague of Kohn's. It may be presumed that he is a religious man and there is no doubt that he is a con-

<sup>1</sup> J. Somerville, *The Philosophy of Peace*, New York, 1949, pp. 242, 243 and 247.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of the information received by the average American, we should like to quote R. W. Burkhardt's "Report on a Test of Information About the Soviet Union in American Secondary Schools" (*The American Slavic and East European Review*, November 1946, pp. 10 and 14): "Only 6 per cent of the students knew that Tsar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate because of inefficient management of the war at home and on the front.... Only 16 per cent of the pupils knew that the United States intervened with the Allies in Russian domestic affairs in 1917-20.... Only 34 per cent knew that the United States was the last major nation to recognise the Soviet Union. Some believed that the United States was the *first* to recognise the Soviet Union." To this one might add that the adult Americans polled were no better informed than the high school students. And yet those were the years when co-operation between the Soviet Union and the United States was at its height. In the subsequent years the Kohns had done a lot to eradicate what little information they possessed. In 1945 people *knew* what Russia had done to save the world from fascism. And fifteen years later Frederick L. Schuman, the American historian, exclaimed: "Do any of us in America any longer remember that in paying the price of common victory Russia's sacrifice in devastation and death was ten times greater than that of all the other United Nations combined?" ("America, Russia, China" by Frederick L. Schuman, *New Times* No. 49, 1958, p. 11.)

<sup>3</sup> F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917. Four Decades of Soviet Politics*, New York, 1957.

vinced opponent of communism. Schuman's dependence on the dogmas of bourgeois historiography is obvious. He actually adheres to the traditional conception regarding Russia's "Westernisation", repeating the traditional phrases that "over the land blew winds from the West, bearing to this dark soil wild seeds destined to grow into strange flowers and exotic fruit".<sup>1</sup> He often claims that the Bolsheviks' domestic and foreign policy is rooted in Russian Messianism and in "Slavophile" and even "Mongol and Byzantine" traditions. He regards the same Hans Kohn as an authority on the identity of policies pursued by the old and new Russia, this land of "commissars and tsars". Schuman is one of the reviewers who praised Kohn's *The Idea of Nationalism*. Like other bourgeois authors, Schuman repeats the *Vekhi* fables about the "dialectics of extremism", which identified the Russian revolutionaries with their enemies. He also affirms that the Bolshevik Party was built in accordance with the principles "recommended by Nechayev" (although, unlike Kohn, he calls Nechayevism a "caricature" on the Russian revolutionaries). He too considers Marxism a "dogma", and so on and so forth. And although they agree on dozens of points, there is a great deal on what Schuman and Kohn disagree.

Kohn's studies are designed to "prove" the impossibility of a compromise between the "liberal" West and the "totalitarian" East, the inevitability and perpetuity if not of hot war then at least of the cold war which, he affirms, is grounded in the very "philosophy of communism".<sup>2</sup> Schuman proves the opposite. "The assumption behind this book is that peace is desirable, necessary, and possible between the halves (or thirds) of a divided world, lest more war bring us all to ruin," he writes in his book. "... If it proves right, then promising vistas loom before us in the way of creative competition—not in the techniques of death, but in the arts of life. It is my hope that this book of record and evaluation may contribute to the constructive use of the opportunities of tomorrow." The epilogue of Schuman's book is entitled "A Time for Peace".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *U.S. Policy in the Cold War—Current History*, October 1959, Vol. 37, No. 218, p. 221. (See *Pravda*, March 7, 1960.)

<sup>3</sup> F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, pp. XII, 473-90.

Hans Kohn's studies amount solely to a repetition of the traditional bourgeois dogmas and set themselves the task of concealing the historical facts which contradict these dogmas or adapting them to these dogmas. Unlike Kohn, Schuman tries to analyse the facts of Russian history objectively. This desire to be objective impels Schuman constantly to contradict the prejudiced views he shares: to characterise, for instance, Soviet society as a "black paradox" and at the same time to consider it in many respects superior to the so-called Western world. In "totalitarian" Russia Schuman discovers huge achievements in social progress and a foreign policy that is sounder than the Western. At the same time he often speaks of the "decline" of the West into a "hideous miasma of irresponsibility, barbarism, and homicidal madness" even before the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>1</sup>

Schuman's desire to discern the objective facts of Soviet history impels us to cite him on a number of issues distorted by Hans Kohn.

The October Revolution, Kohn alleges, was "imposed" on the people by a handful of "Blanquist Bolsheviks"; its aim was to combat "Western" ideals; its basic method was physical extermination of its enemies, bloody terror. Schuman, despite his inconsistency, exposes this lie. It was not the Bolsheviks' "anti-Western" propaganda but the conflict between the interests of the ruling bourgeois parties and the interests of the people which accelerated the revolutionary process in Russia after the February 1917 revolution. Both the "liberal" Cadets and the reactionaries associated with them, Schuman writes, "were progressively weakened and discredited by the fact that their conception of the future was widely at variance with the aspirations of most of the peasantry, the proletariat, and the soldiery. The men in the street, in the villages, and in the trenches were all 'socialists' in varying degrees—and all claimant for peace".<sup>2</sup> The Bolsheviks, Schuman says, and cites facts in support of his claims, did not indulge in engineering "Blanquist" plots. On the contrary, they held that the power would pass into the hands of the proletariat only when the Soviets, which enjoyed "mass

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<sup>1</sup> F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, p. 250, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

support", had decided that it was expedient and necessary to take administration into their hands. The Bolsheviks began preparing for an armed uprising only after power had been taken over by "military reactionaries and Bonapartists", when the Provisional Government "had almost literally no supporters". The purpose was to make the social revolution as peaceful and painless as possible and that, Schuman says, was what distinguished the socialist revolution in Russia. "Bloodshed, arson, and terror were all conspicuous by their absence. Soviet Russia was born and the Provisional Government died with a calm casualness that was anti-climatic. . . . In any case, contrary to the impression that soon became current in the West, the Soviet Government between November and June, 1917-18, established itself and pursued its programme with less violence and with far fewer victims than any other social revolutionary regime in human annals. . . . Although determined to socialise all means of production, Lenin had no desire to deprive the propertied classes of their liberty or their lives so long as there was hope of enlisting their co-operation. The Party sought to persuade bankers, manufacturers, bureaucrats, engineers, and even landlords—all who had exercised managerial functions in the old society—to become salaried officials in the new order."<sup>1</sup>

At the time of revolutionary upheavals in Russia, Hans Kohn claims, the liberal West was particularly concerned with implanting a "democratic order" and "Western freedoms" in this country. The Allies' intervention was confined solely to the restoration of the "second front". The blame for the conflict between the West and the East lay solely with the "intolerant", anti-West Bolsheviks. An entirely different picture of the main phases in the development of relations between Russia and the "West" in the forty years of Soviet rule is painted by Frederick Schuman:

1) *February-October 1917*. Western rulers' lack of understanding of what was happening in Russia. Meagre handouts to the Provisional Government, "professions of virtue and praise of [Allied] unity" and, finally, open demands that "the war be prosecuted more vigorously" and that the question of revising its aims should not be raised. Constant interfer-

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<sup>1</sup> F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, pp. 75, 76, 77, 91, 98-99.

ence in the domestic affairs of the country: demands that it should "take more severe measures against the Bolsheviks leaders", attempts to reconcile Kerensky and Kornilov, assistance given Kerensky in his flight from Petrograd during the October Revolution, etc.<sup>1</sup>

2) *November 1917-20*. American officials' evasive messages to the Bolsheviks and simultaneous organisation of intervention by the Entente Powers in Russia. Unbridled vilification of the Soviet Government by the press and political leaders of the "free West". Reliance on the most reactionary forces in Russia which, though doomed by history, promised to set up a fascist-monarchist regime. "The armed violence of 1918," Schuman writes, "was, as we shall see, initiated by the decision of Western policy-makers to embark upon blockade, invasion, and intervention in Russia in the hope . . . of 'strangling at birth', in Churchill's later phrase, the menace of a communism come to power for the first time in one of the 'great Powers'."<sup>2</sup>

True, while blaming the West for the civil war in Russia and condemning it for armed intervention in Russian affairs, Schuman tries to justify, or at least explain, these actions by saying that "the menace of communism," was a reality and not a myth. "Revolutionary Marxism," he says, "had 'declared war' on all bourgeois governments as long ago as 1847," and Lenin and his comrades "had been summoning the proletariat to destroy all capitalist regimes"<sup>3</sup> during the First World War and especially after the October Revolution. In this given case, however, Schuman confuses two different things: the mortal social conflict between capitalism and communism on the one hand, and armed intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, on the other hand. Communists have always said that capitalism—the system which has brought mankind horrible wars and slavery and poverty to hundreds of millions of people—is doomed by history and will perish sooner or later. But they say that revolution is the affair of the people concerned, that they are against the "export of revolution", against "pushing" it. From the very inception of the Soviet state they have been advocating peace-

<sup>1</sup> F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, pp. 78, 79, 83, 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95, 105, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 115, 120, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

ful coexistence among countries with different social systems, non-interference in the affairs of others.

It is interesting, however, that Schuman realises that the White armies, armed by the "liberal" West and thrown against the Russian people, "in their attitudes and acts ... forshadowed the 'fascism' of times to come, and were beaten thereby".<sup>1</sup>

3) 1920-57. Entente countries forced to recognise the Soviet Union. Constant efforts to reverse its development, the nurturing of the fascist beast which the "democratic" countries of the West later failed to hold in rein. Sabotage of the "collective security" policy, attempts to turn the fascist aggressors against the Soviet Union, encouragement given them to unleash the Second World War. "A large proportion of the propertied classes in the Atlantic nations admired fascism and supposed that their own interests would be served by maintaining and extending fascist power," Schuman writes. "A decisive group of democratic diplomats and political leaders, moreover, fondly hoped and fervently believed that a free hand for the fascist Triplice on three continents would eventuate in a German-Japanese attack on the Soviet Union, that 'civilisation' would thereby be 'saved from Bolshevism'."<sup>2</sup> It was the unwise policy of the "Western democracies" and their stubborn refusal to reckon with the facts which "were to poison East-West relations for ever after, to contribute significantly to the origins of World War II and to the later 'cold war', and to fix patterns of suspicion and hatred on both sides which even today threaten worse catastrophes in times to come".<sup>3</sup>

The years of Soviet power, according to Kohn, are the years of "stagnation". The Professor denies Russia's right to modern history after October 1917. Schuman, after a detailed analysis of the last forty years of Russian history, cannot deny Russia's vast and magnificent successes which enabled her to overcome immeasurable dislocation after the civil war, smash the nazi invaders and heal the wounds sustained in the Second World War quickly and without any assistance. "Industrialisation is not unique," Schuman says.

<sup>1</sup> F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.



"...What is unique in the U.S.S.R. is that a single decade saw developments that required half a century or more elsewhere. Industrialisation was achieved, moreover, without private capital, without foreign investments (save in the form of engineering skills and technical advice), without private ownership of any of the means of production, and with no unearned increment or private fortunes accruing to entrepreneurs or lucky investors. Resources were developed, labour was recruited, trained, and allocated, capital was saved and invested not through the price mechanism of a competitive market but through a consciously devised and deliberately executed national economic plan. . . .

"A staggering human reality is mirrored but faintly in the obvious generalisations: the adventure led from illiteracy to literacy, from the NEP to socialism, from archaic agriculture to collective cultivation, from a rural society to a predominantly urban community, from general ignorance of the machine to social mastery of modern technology."<sup>1</sup>

And one more comparison. Kohn's *Basic History of Modern Russia* and Schuman's *Russia Since 1917* were both published in 1957. Kohn crowns his "studies" with an allegation that the socialist camp is suffering from a "severe" economic and ideological crisis and the hope that Russia and the Russian people will "one day resume the course of their modern history and re-enter the full partnership with Europe".<sup>2</sup>

Schuman is of a different opinion. "The question of whether such a system can 'work' to satisfy needs has long since been answered," he writes. "As of today (and, as far as can be foreseen, for endless tomorrows) the Soviet scheme of socialised enterprise works extraordinarily well."<sup>3</sup>

Schuman's concessions to anti-communism, sometimes forced out of him and sometimes made deliberately, just do not tie with his objectivity as a scholar, his responsibilities as a political publicist, his conscience as a man. It is not very difficult to understand the reasons for these concessions. Schuman can praise Kohn, he can reiterate some of Kohn's ideas, but, fortunately, he has not learned to write like Kohn. He has committed errors but after reading his works we come

<sup>1</sup> F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, pp. 144-45.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, p. 332.

to the conclusion that he does not resort to falsification.<sup>1</sup> While all one can do with Kohn is expose him, with Schuman one can polemise. What is more, Schuman's works repudiate many of Kohn's theories.

### Hans Kohn vs. Hans Kohn

The best proof of the prejudiced nature of Kohn's recent works is undoubtedly to be found in his early works. Kohn was more than just a contemporary of the October Revolution. He was its witness, for in those years he was a prisoner of war in Russia. In the early twenties, after his return from Soviet Russia, he wrote a book called *The Meaning and Destiny of the Revolution*.<sup>2</sup> Even then, it must be said, he tried to explain the puzzle of Russian history with references to a struggle between "Eastern" and "Western" elements and, under the influence of Dostoyevsky and Merezhkovsky, delved into the mystical secrets of the "Russian soul". But as though to spite his teachers and their worthless methodology, Kohn made interesting admissions in this book regarding the meaning and progress of the socialist revolution in Russia. This is all the more noteworthy because even then Kohn did not sympathise with the Bolsheviks. He merely respected objective facts.

Given below are excerpts showing how Kohn's conclusions and assessments compare with what he said and wrote twenty or thirty years ago.

#### *Character of the October Revolution*

1923

It is a "truly Russian revolution (wirkliche russische Revolution)".<sup>3</sup>

1957

It is "not a revolution, but a counter-revolution".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The appearance of Schuman's name in the second edition of *A Picture History of Russia*, of whose falsification records we shall speak below, has aroused certain doubts. Did he take part in these falsifications, did he know about them or were they a complete surprise to him—that is a puzzle to which, unfortunately, we have no key.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, Leipzig, 1923.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 107.

## *Necessity of the October Revolution*

1923

"I have tried to prove that the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in the autumn of 1917 was not fortuitous, that they had to seize it on behalf of the people, that what happened there was the flesh and blood of the people, the Russian people."<sup>1</sup>

1957

"The student must be warned against assuming that the Bolshevik coup of November 1917 was the logical or necessary outcome of modern Russian history. On the contrary, it was, to a very large extent, its denial and reversal."<sup>2</sup>

## *What Made the Bolshevik Victory Possible*

1923

Back in the days of the 1905-07 revolution the workers and the peasants "awoke to political life, instinctively realised the need for European discipline and purposefulness, and instinctively mastered European methods of work... Education began to penetrate into the masses, and greater interest was displayed in Western movements. While failure depressed the tired and harassed intelligentsia, it livened up the hitherto passive people, gave concrete form to their hopes, and stimulated their activity... Everything was portending a new attempt at an uprising which this time contained the seed of a revolution as an encounter between the intellectual leadership which sets ideals and the intelligentsia voicing the economic demands and the inherited conceptions of the masses."<sup>3</sup>

1955-57

"The large majority of the educated classes thus worked for the full integration of Russia into Europe. But their efforts were crushed between the stupidity of a corrupt government and the backwardness and inertia of the masses... The masses were not prepared for constitutional liberty; many of the intellectuals harboured an eschatological faith in revolutionary utopianism... The sudden relaxation of the restraints of traditional authority mobilised the un-Europeanised masses and released forces which Lenin with masterly and ruthless strategy harnessed towards a revival of the Old Muscovite unity of state and church."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, pp. 116-17.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> H. Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 27, 28 and 29.

## *The Cadets' Role in the Russian Revolution*

1923

The Bolsheviks were right supposing that "the liberals wanted to deprive the people of the fruits of its victory". Believing in the constitutional reform promised by the tsar, "the Cadets abandoned the revolutionary popular movement". They "feared the masses" most of all.<sup>1</sup>

1957

"Consisting of highly educated and patriotic citizens, the liberal party could have grown into the instrument for transforming Russian autocracy into a regime of liberty under law."<sup>2</sup>

## *The Activity of the Bourgeois Provisional Government*

1923

The enlightened bourgeoisie "fears the extension of the revolution and the rule of the masses, and for safety sake assumes the leadership. It does so to save the bourgeoisie, not the revolution. . . . The people fought for their old demands: for land and freedom. In the grim war conditions, freedom was tantamount to peace. The Provisional Government, led by big landowner Prince Lvov and consisting mainly of such big capitalists as textile manufacturer Konovalov and sugar millionaire Tereshchenko, openly opposed peace and the seizure of land by the peasants. Before the revolution, all the Ministers, Kerensky included, were monarchists. . . . But the revolutionary government owes its existence to the people's will, it cannot survive if it clashes with this will. . . . The revolution always follows its natural, logic course. The revolution was born of the war and against the war. The

1957

"Meanwhile the Duma tried to lead the revolution into organised channels and to put itself at the head. On March 14 it appointed a Provisional Government. Its chairman was Prince George Lvov, the liberal leader of the Zemstvos, a social reformer with a deep faith in the goodness of the common Russian people. . . . Among other prominent members of the Provisional Government were Milyukov as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Guchkov as Minister of War. Both were determined patriots and nationalists who wished to pursue the war on the side of the Allies until victory and to reap for Russia the desired goal of control of the Straits and Constantinople. The most spectacular member of the Provisional Government, however, was a young man, Alexander Kerensky, a lawyer and brilliant orator, then thirty-five years old, a member of the *Trudoviki* or Labour Party, who

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, pp. 34, 35.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, pp. 60-61.

bourgeois government, using the Right Socialists to hoodwink the people, meant to continue it, though it was contrary to all reason. But foreign capital and the joint class interests were too strong.... Nothing important took place. The Constituent Assembly was not convoked, the law on the nationalisation of land was not promulgated, peace was not concluded.... By the end of October everybody, including the Kerensky government, knew that the Bolsheviks would assume power. They were the only ones who could cope with the chaos. The Provisional Government fell with surprising ease and inevitability, just as the tsarist regime had fallen seven months before that."<sup>1</sup>

embodied the fire and the promise of the revolution.... Immediately after its creation the Provisional Government proceeded to establish complete freedom in Russia.... Yet the soil for such liberty was not well prepared. The liberties must go hand in hand with the assumption of responsibilities, that they demand a sense of fair play and consideration for the national whole, was not realised by the masses. Liberty meant to them the absence of authority."<sup>2</sup>

*The Role of "Western" Influences Between the  
February and October Revolutions*

1923

"The Allies were not rendering any assistance. What is more, their ruling classes, being by nature hostile to the revolution and having not the least idea about the import of the events, were interfering dangerously in domestic affairs and protesting against the nationalisation of land."<sup>3</sup>

1957

"In those days, the growing penetration of Western ideas into Russia had helped the birth of the new regime of political liberty and democratic equality, the abolition of the traditional police regime, the confidence in the ability of the common man to think for himself and to help decide the life of the nation."<sup>4</sup>

*Bolshevik Tactics in 1917*

1923

"The strengthening of Bolshevism was not a fruit of any special agitation but the inev-

1957

"When tactical reasons demanded it, Lenin never hesitated to put forward false claims for

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, pp. 45, 50, 51, 52, 53.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, pp. 96-99.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 101.

itable result of the march of events. The Bolsheviks merely carried out the people's programme and therein lay their strength, their mission. Theirs was the only real revolution, if revolution means realisation of the people's aspirations."<sup>1</sup>

his party. These claims won most of the support the Bolsheviks had then in Russia."<sup>2</sup>

### *The Nature of the Bolshevik Government*

1923

"For the first time in history people here created their own state, just as knights created a feudal state, as the bourgeoisie created its own republic in the days of the French revolution. And no one can say that a handful of politicians or even a secret organisation of persons alien to the people has imposed this state on the Russian people. What ignorance of history!"<sup>3</sup>

1957

"Lenin established the first totalitarian government in history.... Before 1917 hardly anyone could foresee the nature of such a government which ran counter to all Western traditions and all Russian hopes for freedom. Nor did the Russian people intend the creation of such a government.... Lenin... put his trust in the resolute and ruthless action of a small minority of highly disciplined and trained professional revolutionists who would be ready in time of crisis to impose their will upon the people..."<sup>4</sup>

### *Freedom in Bolshevik Russia*

1923

"A new feeling of freedom of human dignity was maturing, similar to the one engendered by the Age of Enlightenment, but here it penetrated deeper and affected a huge number of people."<sup>5</sup>

1957

"Under Lenin, the Constitutional Assembly was doomed as all liberty in Russia was doomed."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 107; *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 233-34.

<sup>5</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 108.

SINN UND SCHICKSAL  
DER  
REVOLUTION

VON  
HANS KOHN

★

1 9 2 3

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dem sie sich selbst schmückten. Es sind von Zukunft Schwangere, Zukunftswahnbesessene. Ihre Tragik aber ist, daß ihre desinteressierte Sehnsucht sofort von Smerdjakoff benutzt wird, um das Reich „Chams“ aufzurichten, das Reich des dunkeln Pöbels, um in der Schrankenlosigkeit der russischen Seele jeden werdenden Kosmos zu begraben.

★

Die Ereignisse in der russischen Geschichte von März 1917 bis März 1918 sind zu bekannt, als daß ich sie hier zu schildern brauchte. Es gilt nur, die für uns typischen Hauptzüge herauszugreifen. Als im März 1917 sich die Revolution vollzog, stellte sich nach einem Augenblick gemeinsamen Aufschwungs dar, daß die Massen, daß das Volk ohne Führer waren. Das Volk verlangte seine alte Lösung: Land und Freiheit. Freiheit war nach dem grauenhaften Zwang des Krieges gleichbedeutend mit Frieden. Die provisorische Regierung mit dem Großgrundbesitzer Fürst Lwoff an der Spitze, der vorwiegend Vertreter des Großkapitals angehörten, wie der Textilgroßindustrielle Konowaloff, der Zuckermillionär Terestschenko, ist offen gegen den Frieden und gegen die Besitzergreifung des Landes durch die Bauern. Alle Minister bis auf Kerensky waren vor dem Umsturz Monarchisten gewesen. Eine solche Regierung kann sich nur halten, falls sie legitimistisch ist, d. h. wenn sie durch im Volksbewußtsein befestigte Tradition gestützt wird. Eine revolutionäre Regierung verdankt ihren Bestand dem Volkswillen: sie kann nicht bestehen, wenn sie sich in Gegensatz zum Volkswillen setzt. Das Bürgertum suchte die Revolution an sich zu reißen. Es konnte ihm nicht gelingen, da es die elementaren Forderungen des Volkes nicht erfüllen konnte und wollte: eine entschädigungslose Übergabe des Bodens ins Eigentum des arbeitenden Volkes hätte die wichtigsten Schichten des großen Bürgertums und des Adels vernichtet, den Friedensschluß aber verbot ihre ganze Weltanschau-

Hans Kohn exposes Hans Kohn. The cover and one of the pages of an early work in which he wrote that the Russian bourgeoisie and the Provisional Government had betrayed the nation's interests in 1917



## *The Attitude of Bolshevism to the Western World*

1923

Bolshevism "is in a way trying to Europeanise Russia, give her an orderly government, bring enlightenment to the masses. . . .

"Unknown peoples in the hinterland and on the borders of Asia live their own life for the first time in the history we know of and have at the same time Europeanised themselves and come into contact with the existing civilisation."<sup>1</sup>

1957

"Lenin saw Western society and civilisation as the great enemy. . . . He not only turned Russia against the West, but looked towards Asia to support Russia in the struggle against the West. . . ." "Russia's defection from the Allied side in March 1918, when her capital was transferred from westward-looking St. Petersburg back to Moscow in the interior, signalled the growing estrangement of Russia and Asia from the West."<sup>2</sup>

## *Comparison of the Bourgeois Revolutions in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries with the Proletarian Revolution in Russia*

1923

"While the French revolution was only a European event, the Russian is growing more and more into a universal one. Bolshevism is a step towards a universal synthesis. . . . The gentry and the bourgeoisie appear to have exhausted themselves, their creative forces are running dry. . . . The new era, whose advent can hardly be prevented by a new Holy Alliance and whose fruit will be enjoyed only by the future generations, will bring freedom to the Fourth Estate. If the task of the French revolution was to free the Third Estate, then it becomes clear how much greater the Russian revolution is. It is a question of numberless millions of new

1957

"The Anglo-American revolutions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries developed against a unique background of English traditions of self-government and individual liberty. Thus they could lead to a continuous flowering of freedom under law. . . . The French revolution introduced the symbols of a new cult of liberty and human rights and coined the three words which expressed the essence of a new goal of democracy: the liberty of every individual, the equality of all men, and the brotherhood of all human beings. . . . The new ideas penetrated into Central Europe and even into Russia. . . . Democracy for the first time

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, pp. 62, 84.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 117; *The Twentieth Century*, p. 250.

people, of forming and transforming whole nations. A new mankind will come into existence with the liberation of the Fourth Estate: a cosmos of new sentiments, new values, new endeavours. A new culture, which as yet cannot be described by anyone, will draw millions of formerly inapt and inert people and a great many backward and lethargic nations into the radiant sphere of its influence. The unity of mankind is thus becoming increasingly manifest."<sup>1</sup>

seemed about to fulfil its worldwide mission of a liberating message to all classes and to all peoples. . . . The Russian revolution turned into a disaster because its stage was set among the politically, culturally, and socially most backward masses of Europe, where the traditions of liberty were just beginning to take root."<sup>2</sup>

In 1922, when few people in the West understood what was going on in Russia, Kohn thus wrote of the Bolsheviks' first successes in their creative endeavours: "Infinitely much has been done here (in Russia) in the past few years."<sup>3</sup> Thirty-five years later, when the whole world had come to know how infinitely much had been done in Russia, Kohn decided . . . to "end" her history with the October Revolution in 1917.

Is it surprising after all this that young Kohn analysed the whole problem of "Western" and "Eastern" nationalism from a totally different angle? In Europe, he then wrote, nationalism had already fulfilled its historical mission and become morally superfluous. "In the East it may be regarded as a positive and progressive force both morally and economically."<sup>4</sup>

Kohn then regarded the Soviet Union's struggle against the capitalism of the Western Powers not as an attempt to isolate the East from the West, Asia from Europe, but as a development which for the first time *included the backward nations of Asia among those advancing along a common path of social progress*.<sup>5</sup>

Back in the thirties Kohn denounced fascism, and claimed

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, pp. 71, 93, 94.

<sup>2</sup> H. Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia*, p. 28; *The Twentieth Century*, pp. 190, 191.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, p. 90.

<sup>4</sup> H. Kohn, *Nationalismus und Imperialismus im Vordenen Orient*, Frankfurt on the Main, 1931, p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> See H. Kohn, *Orient und Okzident*, Berlin, 1931, pp. 13, 91.

that communism was a staunch opponent of fascism, its complete opposite by its aims and its whole world outlook. Now this same Kohn says that communism and fascism are identical and tries to show that they are the opposite of the "Western tradition of reason".<sup>1</sup>

Were this "great historian of our day" to publish a collection of his works, he would have to do a lot of work re-writing and re-editing his earlier essays. In the past he was at the crossroads of mysticism and historiography. Now mysticism is supplemented by falsification of history, by distortion not only of other people's works but of his own as well. But while his early studies helped the reader understand the "meaning and destiny" of the great revolution, his latest "works" do not. Pursuing them, the reader wonders how the once backward and downtrodden Russia has managed to become the leader of social progress and guide hundreds of millions of people, how her science has risen to first place in the world, how it has become possible for her to set herself the task of advancing to first place in the world in the volume of industrial output and ensuring her people the highest living standard in the world. Kohn's fables about the "Mongol and Byzantine tradition", the "Blanquist Bolsheviks" who had isolated Russia from the West, his excursions into the history of Pan-Slavism, his quotations from Dostoyevsky and Tyutchev will hardly explain anything to the reader. But there is no doubt that his earlier works, written when he was young and unknown, do explain certain things.

And so what we have before us is not errors committed in the quest of truth but deliberate distortion of the well-known truths Kohn himself had discovered.

As Hans Kohn's essays show, he has so far "evolved" in one direction only—renunciation of truth. But one cannot vouch for everyone, and it is quite possible that Kohn may learn to camouflage his conceptions still more subtly and skilfully or (although it is highly incredible) renounce falsification and vilification. But whatever happens to him, one thing is certain: the trend he represents today is profound and stable and cannot vanish from the ideological super-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Kohn, *Revolutions and Dictatorships*, 1941, p. 188, and H. Kohn, *The Twentieth Century*, pp. 56, 131, 151, 194, 250.

structure of bourgeois society so long as its class foundations remain unchanged. Moreover, however the views of the Professor may change, his works of the forties and fifties will remain a *classical example* of the falsification tendencies which prevailed in the United States in the era of McCarthyism and, unfortunately, still prevail.

Incidentally, the whole of the "Hans Kohn vs. Hans Kohn" section could be renamed *Rewriting Russian History*, as a symposium published in the United States is called—a symposium which seeks to prove that the whole development of Soviet historiography is merely substitution of certain theses by other theses to suit the situation.<sup>1</sup> Among the "guardians" of historical truth contributing to this symposium are those who once masqueraded as Soviet citizens, then sold themselves to the nazis and have now been welcomed to American bourgeois science. Having selected from Soviet literature certain critical remarks concerning Soviet historians, they try to pass off our *frank admission* of our errors, our struggle for *genuine objectivity* in Marxist science, for "absence" of objectivity in it. As one of the epigraphs to the symposium they have taken Voltaire's words: "To write history well, one must be in a free country." These are splendid words, of course. But though we have tried hard, we have found no answer in "free" America's bourgeois literature to the question why Kohn "rewrites Russian history".

Perhaps the Professor is an exception in the science of the "free" West. Here is an example which, along with Kohn's, may well be perpetuated as a classical example of "rewriting history". *A Picture History of Russia* was published in the United States in 1945 and then in 1956. On the same pages, but in different editions, one reads the following:

*1945 Edition*

"Lenin ... did not hesitate long to meet violence with violence" (p. 209).

"The nationality policy of the

*1956 Edition*

"Lenin ... did not hesitate to use cruelty and violence systematically" (p. 209).

"The nationality policy of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Rewriting Russian History. Soviet Interpretations of Russia's Past*, New York, 1956.

Soviet government is the exact reverse of that of the empire" (p. 227).

"Workers' sanatorium at Kislovodsk, where overtired labourers were rehabilitated at state expense" (p. 276).

Soviet government is a subtle change from that of the empire" (p. 227).

"Bureaucrats' sanatorium at Kislovodsk, where overtired élite rested at state expense" (caption under the same picture on p. 274).

So far we have found no explanation in the American press of this and other similar examples, but we have found that the 1956 edition retains "the objective viewpoint of the original edition", clarifying the latter in the light of "later, more complete information" about Soviet Russia. That is how the history of "totalitarian Russia" is written and rewritten in "free America".

## C h a p t e r IV

### THE LINK BETWEEN HISTORY AND POLITICS IN THE PRESENT-DAY WORLD

#### Reasons For Hans Kohn's Apostasy

Let us see what has happened to Hans Kohn. Why has he completely rewritten the history of Russia? How come that under his pen the realm of imperialism has become a free world, the October Revolution—a counter-revolution, and social progress in Russia—regress? What has made him say the struggle of the Eastern peoples for political and social liberation from imperialism is the struggle of the “totalitarian” Asian nations against “Europe”, what has made him claim that bringing culture within the reach of the peoples of the East really means their isolation from culture?

Although Kohn does not dwell much on his former views, one concludes from his latest works that he has become “more experienced”.

“The writing of history is always selective,” he says in one of his latest works *The Mind of Germany*. “The accents and stresses are determined by the experiences of our generation and by our own value judgments. To rethink history is the task of every generation which has witnessed great historical changes.”<sup>1</sup>

Old values, of course, can and sometimes must be reappraised in the light of subsequent developments. But there

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *The Mind of Germany*, p. IX.

are facts and conclusions that cannot be cancelled out by any subsequent developments. Such, for instance, is the fact that the First World War was unleashed by the imperialists and the first to end it was the Russian revolutionary proletariat. Such, for instance, are the conclusions regarding the reactionary nature of colonialism, the popular character of the socialist revolution in Russia. But it is these facts and conclusions that Hans Kohn revises sophistically. The result of his latest works is expressed by one simple formula, its "substantiation" by one simple method. The whole of the history of Russia since October 1917 is reduced exclusively to errors linked with the Stalin personality cult, the whole of the history of Russia before the October Revolution is described as "preparation" of this cult. Proclaiming that the Communists' self-criticism is evidence of the "crisis of communism", bourgeois propaganda has been trying to conceal the real crisis of bourgeois politics and ideology and "to throw doubt on the great ideas of Marxism-Leninism, undermine the working people's confidence in the U.S.S.R.—the world's first socialist country—and sow confusion in the ranks of the international communist and labour movement."<sup>1</sup> The axis of anti-Soviet propaganda in the past few years and of bourgeois historiography concerning the U.S.S.R. has been the deliberately false theory that the personality cult was engendered by the Soviet system itself, that it was a "logical consequence" of Marxism-Leninism, and was predetermined by the whole course of Russia's history. Every means was used to prove that the Communists' *errors* were *inherent* in communism. Every effort is being made by the Kohns to conceal the fact that the errors committed in the personality cult period were not engendered by the theory and practice of communism but by deviation from this theory and practice, by the failure to fulfil Marx's instructions and to abide by Lenin's principles of democratism, and that the Communists have themselves exposed these errors and are themselves rectifying them. These errors were not and could not be fatally inevitable. Though a possibility, the personality cult did not necessarily have to turn into a reality. The conclusion people inevitably

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<sup>1</sup> *On Overcoming the Personality Cult and Its Consequences*, Moscow, 1956, p. 6.

draw is that communism must indeed be intrinsically powerful if it has grown into such a gigantic force in spite of all errors. What incomparable, inexhaustible possibilities for development it offers if the right policy is followed! Kohn's attempts to justify his change of heart, to pass himself off for a truth seeker who is profoundly disappointed in socialism, are nothing but attempts to conceal his apostasy.

The real nature of the Professor's views becomes obvious when one compares his theories with the words and deeds of the leading bourgeois politicians in the West. In both instances we find one and the same thing: apologies for capitalism and calumny of socialism, opposition of the "free" West to the "totalitarian" East, identification of the foreign and domestic policies of tsarist Russia and Soviet Russia, of the fascist regimes and Soviet democracy, attempts to quarrel the Soviet people and the Party, efforts to speculate on the personality cult errors, defence of colonialism and condemnation of the national liberation movements, reliance on military blocs and crusades, and, finally, invocation of God's blessings for all this. Kohn repeats everything Dulles and Nixon have done. Strength policy is reinforced by the policy of lies. The politicians command and the "scientists" obey—and do it willingly and voluntarily. Kohn's scientific "conclusions" are not conclusions; they are merely execution of commands. He proves only that "which is to be proved". He slavishly copies all the motions and gestures of his bosses, he has turned into a puppet, into a *Stroh puppe*, to use his own term of the 1920s.

While distortion of the facts in Kohn's latest works was predetermined by his idealistic methodology, this "methodology", we now see, is predetermined by his present social views. They have changed and so has his attitude to science.

One should not tag the label of falsifier and self-seeker to every person who errs. The fact that the objective role played in society by theory is the most important thing does not mean that one should neglect subjective aspects. On the contrary, it is only by proving that the given idea is objectively erroneous and pernicious that it is possible to persuade a person to change his mind—that is, if he is really well-intentioned. Nothing has greater effect on a subjectively honest but seriously mistaken person than the proof that his



activity is objectively harmful, than the conviction that he is a pawn in the hands of anti-popular parties and classes. History is not all smooth going, and this holds good for science too, for the thorny path scientists have to traverse. They must be helped to solve the seemingly hopeless contradictions in which they are entangled, and it is necessary to look for, find and cultivate the grains of truth there are. That is precisely what Marx, Engels and Lenin did when they distinguished conscious falsifiers from those mistaken, denouncing the former and at the same time mercilessly criticising the errors of the latter. It may be recalled that Marx, having exposed the errors of Ricardo, at the same time said that he was a man of science, a man of scientific integrity, and that his arguments were "*stoic, objective and scientific*".<sup>1</sup>

But there is another category of "researchers"—not those who err but those who have turned science into an object of speculation. It was of this category that Marx said: "The man who seeks to *adapt* science to a point of view which does not arise out of it—however erroneous it may be—but is taken from without, from *extrinsic interests* that are *alien* to science, this man, I say, is 'mean'..." He is "not a *man of science* but a *mercenary advocate*".<sup>2</sup>

Hans Kohn is a real classical specimen of such bourgeois scientists. He sees no contradictions between the subjective aims of his studies and the objective results of their appearance in the bourgeois world. He knows very well what he does and whom he serves.

In the past Kohn relied mostly on his own interpretation of facts. One could find originality and depth, conviction and passion in his old essays on the "meaning and destiny" of the October Revolution in Russia. "All that the heralds and seers, prophets and artists have created in the minds, images and rhythm of words," the Professor wrote, "tries to enter the realm of reality in the course of assaults by the masses. What was formerly a light game of minds hits painfully, what used to be fine and elegant seems ugly and disorderly. But however ugly, awkward and clumsy a young body may

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, Part 2, Berlin, 1959, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 109.

be, it grows in some mysterious way. Amazing beauty surrounds these people who become full-fledged citizens, legislators of a free society. . . . Victory has not yet been secured, there may yet be many seeming defeats. But the arch of the bridge stretches all the more fearlessly and rapidly to the distant bank, towards the future. More and more people, growing masses of them enter upon the widening path. . . . It lies over dangerous precipices, they are threatened by landslides, a chasm of darkness looms below. But the future beckons, the passionate dream urges on. More, younger people set out to create and build. . . ."<sup>1</sup> What beautiful, humane words! Compare them with the words and thoughts of present-day Kohn: the West, thinking of colonialism, "suffers from an unnecessarily bad conscience", although it has "no need to be ashamed". What a come-down! What cynicism! You read these words over and over again, compare them, and simply cannot believe that they have been written by one and the same man.

The historian's talent has turned into its opposite, the honest quest of truth has given place to profit-seeking, the analysis of facts has been substituted by dissemination of vile and malicious fables. Kohn has nevertheless acquired some originality to make good the one he has lost. In *The Twentieth Century. The Challenge to the West and Its Response*, he writes that the "unprecedented crisis" which has affected all the aspects of life in the capitalist world is not a crisis but . . . a growing pain.<sup>2</sup> This statement by a leading American historian will undoubtedly go down in history as a classical example of utterly obtuse defence of capitalism.

A similar record of professorial obtuseness is another of Kohn's conclusions in *Basic History of Modern Russia*. In 1957, the year the Soviet Union scored huge successes, the Professor said the renovation of its modern history lay in . . . resumption of that "full partnership with Europe" the Cadets dreamed of half a century ago and of the "beneficent" fruits of which Kohn himself wrote: "Russia (in 1917—*Authors*) typified not so much a modern national state as a quasi-

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<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, pp. 96, 98.

<sup>2</sup> See H. Kohn, *The Twentieth Century*, pp. 271, 272.

colonial country exploited by Western capitalism with the aid of its own government and upper classes."<sup>1</sup>

That obtusity apparently can't be helped. But in explaining Kohn's revelations we do not want to emulate Kohn, who attributed vital developments in Russian history to the stupidity or the senility of the intellect of Russia's monarchs. Obtusity, or rather the mass torpor of bourgeois scientists, is a social and not physiological phenomenon. They are dulled by official standards, the ban to think otherwise than prescribed, the very task they have undertaken: to deny the undeniable, to prove the unprovable. The abilities of the "great American sociologist" flourished in the era of McCarthyism, at a time when many professors were engaged less in science than in proving their loyalty, and thought of their career and not the truth.<sup>2</sup> Kohn smelled what wonderful prospects were offered him by anti-communism. In those days it was simply impossible to win recognition as an official American historian and at the same time remain true to objective facts, and Kohn's career proves that it was so. Not many Americans have had the honour of being called "American historian and political scientist". Kohn won this honour by falsifying history.

### **François Guizot's Testament and Modern Bourgeois Historiography**

The link between social ideas and the corresponding policy is generally unavoidable in class society. It is always necessary to establish it. The question is only *what* ideas are linked with *what* policy, and *what form* this link has taken. It may be most diverse. Sometimes it is very difficult to discover

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Kohn, *Basic History of Modern Russia*, p. 118, and his *Revolutions and Dictatorships*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> "In America," writes Schuman of those days, "the 'Cold War' begot 'McCarthyism' on a vast scale, national and local, and threatened for a time to submerge all standards of decency and sanity in a miasma of suspicion, fear, and hate. Save for suicides, few victims of the national hysteria were killed—apart from Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, executed as 'atomic spies' on June 19, 1953. But hundreds were defamed and thousands lost their livelihood, in and out of public service, under accusation of being 'communists' or Soviet sympathisers." F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, p. 403.

this link—it is that well concealed, consciously or unconsciously. Sometimes it is very simple and easy to discover it.

Hans Kohn, the "great" historian of today, likes to compare himself to François Guizot, the great historian of yesterday. There is indeed one good reason for such comparison. What is common to both Kohn and Guizot is the close and *absolutely open* link between politics and history, their indissoluble unity. But, while recognising that in this respect Kohn does continue with Guizot's traditions, we have something important to add. The link between politics and history can be dualistic. A link between progressive politics and history is one thing; a link between reactionary politics and history is quite another. The former is an important prerequisite of the existence and development of historical science; the latter kills it. This immutable truth is obvious in small things and big. We have seen it in Kohn's evolution. The history of François Guizot's degradation confirms it.

The aim of Guizot's historical essays, in every stage of his activity, was always the same: he cited facts from the past to help promote certain political ideas and institutions in the present. While the young historian Guizot saw in the facts of the past a weapon of struggle for the traditions of the 1789 Revolution, to old Guizot they were a weapon to be used against these traditions.

In the 1820s young Guizot, despite his sympathy for constitutional monarchism, addressed the following remarkable words to the nobility: "What! You are telling us to forget our history because its conclusion was against you!"<sup>1</sup> He had penetrated deep into the essence of developments and realised that the relations of ownership engendered class struggle and determined its process. The revolution, he wrote, was "a terrible struggle but legitimate".<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the development of the class struggle posed new problems before the victorious bourgeoisie. If the bourgeoisie had the right to start a revolution against the feudals and if this revolution was legitimate and just, why cannot the proletariat declare its right to start a legitimate revolution

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<sup>1</sup> *Du Gouvernement de la France depuis la Restauration, 1821*, p. XX.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. XXVIII.

against the bourgeoisie? It looks as though the bourgeoisie itself set an example to the proletariat, does not it?

To these new questions Guizot, who had by then turned into a reactionary bourgeois politician, Minister and head of a counter-revolutionary government, gave "new" answers. He had "grown wiser", he had "opened his eyes". As far as he was concerned, the revolutions of 1640-49 and 1789-94 were accidental "disorders", and class struggle was "a scourge and a shame". The "glorious revolution" in England was now the "specimen" which he more or less accepted; it was an event whose legality and logicity he as yet did not deny. If we look at the path Guizot traversed from the beginning to the middle of the nineteenth century, says the author of *The Political Ideas of the French Bourgeois Historiography of the Nineteenth Century*, "we shall see, as it were, two Guizots: Guizot the apologist for the 1789 Revolution and Guizot its convinced opponent; Guizot the defender of the unity of the Third Estate and Guizot the mortal enemy of the proletariat; Guizot the political leader of the bourgeoisie when settling accounts with the nobility and Guizot the staunch ally of the nobility; Guizot the ideologue of the bourgeoisie who elaborated the theory of class struggle and Guizot who had completely repudiated the theory of class struggle and declared war upon it".<sup>1</sup>

It was in the years of struggle with the revolution that Guizot advanced the thesis concerning the immutability of national traditions. But Hans Kohn, who borrows this thesis from Guizot, does not say that with old Guizot it was linked with outright falsification of historical events. The best proof thereof may be found, for instance, in the Introduction to the first volume of *History of the English Revolution (Histoire de la révolution d'Angleterre)*, in which the famous historian reversed all his main conclusions and all his fundamental assessments. This work shows, Marx and Engels wrote, that "even the wisest people of the *ancien régime*, even those whose talent as historians can in no way be denied, were so confused by the fatal events in February that they have

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<sup>1</sup> M. A. Alpatov, *Politicheskiye idei frantsuzskoi burzhuaiznoi istoriografii XIX veka (The Political Ideas of the French Bourgeois Historiography of the XIX th century)*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1949, p. 120.

ceased to understand history and have even ceased to understand their own past deeds. . . . The whole of the revolution is said to be the result of the ill will and religious fanaticism of a few trouble-makers who were not content with moderate freedom. . . . When the threads of England's historical development end up in one knot, which M. Guizot himself cannot cut—if only for semblance sake—with the aid of purely political phraseology, he resorts to religious phraseology, to the armed intervention of Providence. . . . Guizot escapes from his conscience with the aid of God and from the uninitiated public with the aid of style."<sup>1</sup>

Guizot, as we have already said, was not only a historian but a politician. He made short shrift of the revolution not only on the pages of his books but in the streets of Paris. And, summing up the results of his theory and practice, he wrote in his *Essays on the History of France*, which Kohn cites, the following well-known words: "If history elucidates politics, then politics do the same service to history but to a greater degree. The affairs of the present illumine the facts of the past."<sup>2</sup>

In this formula, however, Guizot has omitted a "small" detail. The policy of the progressive rising classes, whose vital interests inspire their quest of the truth, can indeed help illumine the facts of the past. But for old Guizot, who had made historical science serve the interests of the moribund reactionary forces, the affairs of the present merely *obscured* these facts. And his words became a sort of testament to bourgeois historiography—a behest to falsify history to suit current policies.

Hans Kohn and his present colleagues faithfully carry it out. Their works prove once again that what capitalism really needs is not science but elaboration of its own illusions, distortion of the objective notions about the world, about its opponent and about itself.

If it is required to repudiate the undeniable fact that modern society is advancing to socialism and communism, dozens of so-called Russian experts start evolving a theory about the diametrically different paths of the so-

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 7, Berlin, 1960, pp. 207, 210, 212.

<sup>2</sup> F. Guizot, *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, p. VI.

called West and the so-called East. If it is required to substantiate the thesis that Soviet Russia is "identical" with tsarist Russia, and just as "totalitarian", the Barghoorns, Tompkinses, Kohns and others of their ilk start looking for the "roots" of Russian statehood in the autocracy of Ivan the Terrible or Peter I and speaking of the permanency of the "Russian mind" and the national traditions of the old and new Kremlin. If it is required to substantiate the myth about the aggressiveness of Russian communism and prove that the Soviet Union follows an "imperialist policy", essays are written on the history of Russian Pan-Slavism. If it is required to represent Leninism as a specifically Russian religious and mystical ideology these essays turn the Bolsheviks into successors of Slavophilism and find "embryos" of Lenin's ideas in the works of Khomyakov, Dostoyevsky and even Iosif Volotsky. If it is required to smear the organizational principles of the Bolshevik Party there appear the works which pin on Bolshevism the heritage it has repudiated—such as Nechayevism and Bakuninism—and deny it the heritage it has developed. If it is required to mark the fortieth anniversary of the socialist revolution in Russia with calumny of socialism, the vile allegation that the Bolsheviks were agents of Kaiser Germany is immediately revived and so-called scholars on Russian revolution publish essays, which they illustrate with "photographs of documents" to prove that it was "financed by the Germans".

Called upon to "draw lessons from the past", to unravel the "mystery" of Bolshevism, tens and hundreds of latter-day Russian specialists have proved capable of doing only one thing—repeating *Vekhi's* malicious vilification of the Bolsheviks and reproducing on a large scale the Russian bourgeoisie's fables about the march of events, about its enemy and about itself. Whatever theme they may choose, the reactionary historians' conclusions about Russian history are decided upon even before they set out to investigate the facts, they are of an *a priori* nature. All these "Russian specialists" work for the same people, they have the same theories, the same methodology, the same sources. All their "latest" treatises are cut on one and the same old, tedious pattern. The official bourgeois historiography of Russia, represented

by the Karpoviches, Leontoviches, Tompkinses, Barghoorns, Moorheads and dozens of their colleagues, is truly an unimaginative historiography which lacks anything resembling independent thoughts and is dominated by the same drab, depressive *clichés*. Kohn repeats in *The Mind of Modern Russia* what Stuart Ramsey Tompkins wrote in his *Russian Mind*; all the conclusions and inferences in Karpovich's *Imperial Russia* are reproduced in Kohn's *Basic History of Modern Russia*; if you have read one study, one "outstanding" specialist, you know in advance the reference material, the methodology and the conclusions of scores and hundreds of others.

And all these "specialists" substitute ellipses for the events and deeds that do not suit them, and draw the same groundless parallels and analogies. All these researchers have the same sources: the writings of the Russian *Vekhi* authors and their followers abroad, people like Struve, Berdayev and Thomáš Masaryk. And they are all actually guided in their study of the "roots" of the Bolshevik revolution by the words written by their spiritual mentor, Berdayev, in his book *The Russian Idea*: "I shall be interested less in the question of what Russia was empirically than in the question of what the Creator (or, rather, Berdayev himself—*Authors*) meant Russia to be. . . . Empirically, there is ever so much that is revolting in Russian history."<sup>1</sup>

Hans Kohn and his colleagues strictly obey this commandment, and their lies are to the same extent sanctified by religion. The Kohns are empirically "revolted" by the identity of the Russian Communists' traditions and the great democratic and socialist traditions of the West, and they attribute to Lenin what he never said and distort what he did say. They are "revolted" by the achievements of socialism, and go as far as to end the history of modern Russia in 1917. They are "revolted" by the colonial nations' liberation struggle, and are prepared to declare "Eastern nationalism" an unhealthy phenomenon. They are generally "revolted" by the whole world, which is developing contrary to their prescriptions,

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<sup>1</sup> N. A. Berdayev, *Russkaya ideya* (*The Russian Idea. Basic Problems of Russian Thought in the Nineteenth Century and at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*), Paris, 1946, p. 5.



and so, being incapable of understanding its laws and changing things, they create another, illusory world in their books and carve up and remake its history in their own way.

We must stress once again that the reader should not think that contemporary Western science is represented only by the Kohns. There are quite a few bourgeois historians who do not defend capitalism so primitively as Hans Kohn, who differ from Kohn if not by their power of conviction, then at least by their subtlety. There are bourgeois scholars too who respect the facts, and in their works discrepancy between the methods and facts is growing increasingly tangible. Lastly, there are those who are coming to realise that capitalism is doomed and that the bourgeois world outlook is untenable. More and more historians abroad are joining the struggle for peace. There is no doubt that the future belongs to these, the latest, tendencies.

But, for the time being, the Kohns flourish and predominate in official bourgeois science. And this science is used to sow animosity among the nations, to keep the cold war going, to calumniate communism.

This combination of reactionary politics and pseudo-history may be illustrated by some recent examples. In September 1959 one American newspaper published excerpts from the fables about Russia written by the Marquis de Custine more than 100 years ago (*Russia in 1839*<sup>1</sup>). Richard M. Nixon, then U.S. Vice-President, recommended this book as a key to the understanding of present-day Russia. Will anyone deny that arguments of this sort are supplied to reactionary American politicians and the no less reactionary press by "historians" like Kohn who reproduces de Custine's memoirs in *The Mind of Modern Russia* and other similar essays? In the summer of 1960 Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York "discovered" a Lenin quotation "characterising the Communists" and cited it in a speech. Here it is: "By the employment of terror, and its auxiliaries, treason, perjury and the negation of all truth, we shall reduce humanity to a state of docile submission to our domination."<sup>2</sup> A check-up

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<sup>1</sup> *La Russie en 1839*.

<sup>2</sup> See *The New York Times*, July 13, 1960, p. 2.

showed that this "Lenin quotation" was a crude forgery, and gave the world another convincing proof that it was the so-called free Western world, and not the Communists, which "repudiates all truth". The capitalist press, however, found a way to save the governor's face by announcing that although the authenticity of the quotation had not been established, it nevertheless gave a pretty good idea of the "Soviet mind"! Wasn't it from manuals like Kohn's *The Mind of Modern Russia* that Rockefeller and his aides drew their inspiration?

### Affinity of Old and New Reaction

Drawing all sorts of groundless historical parallels is, as it were, a hobby with the official Russian studies in the bourgeois world. There is no law prohibiting comparison of historical developments over the centuries. In fact, comparison is a useful method of elucidating them. Only one should not compare things as Kohn and his colleagues do. One should compare only comparable phenomena, and comparisons should have a common social basis.

For instance, one can draw a convincing historical parallel between the policies of the past and present imperialists and exploiters, say, between the reactionary policy of nineteenth-century tsarist Russia and the reactionary policy of the present-day United States. True, besides common aspects, this parallel—like any other—has its distinctive features: Russia was merely a European gendarme and the U.S. imperialists are laying claim to the role of world gendarme. Russia defended moribund feudalism and the United States is defending both moribund capitalism and the rotten semi-feudal regimes. But these differences do not do away with affinities and similarities—they do not exist only in the minds of historians, they really exist, in the form of reactionary alliances between the imperialist United States and the dictatorial regimes, the political riff-raff like Franco, Chiang Kai-shek. . . . Latterly even Kohn has been bemoaning the fact that "our support of dictators in Spain and Latin America weakens the position of the West in its struggle with com-

munism",<sup>1</sup> without, however, admitting that this support is less the result of errors and miscalculations than an expression of the affinity of the reactionary elements of different countries.

Good opportunities for comparison are offered by the policy followed by present-day Western colonialists and the policy of the Russian serf-owners of yesterday. The former have for centuries been oppressing and exploiting other nations, the latter had done it with their own people—it was not for nothing that the Russian peasant was compared to the Negro slave. Only the revolution or the obvious threat of a revolutionary outburst made the colonialists and the serf-owners "free" the slaves, and both did everything to replace the old colonial slavery or serfdom with some new kind of bondage. The Russian serf-owners, having finally realised that it would be "better from above than below", in 1861 "freed" the peasants and "allotted" land to them. Half a century later, however, the peasants were still repaying their "debt" to their benefactors, and millions of dessiatines of the best soil were still in the hands of the landowners. And since the ruined and robbed peasants continued their struggle, the "liberators" began to clamour about "black ingratitude", and their ideologists cooked up special theories claiming that "the more liberal the autocratic regime became, the more vicious instincts it engendered". But aren't the present-day colonialists using analogical methods in "freeing" the peoples of their dependencies "from above" and aren't the Kohns cooking up similar theories in their "reflections" on colonialism? The only difference is that the Russian serf-owners succeeded in deferring "emancipation" for half a century and even more while their successors will have to get out of the colonies faster: the former African slave becomes a democrat very fast, much faster than the Russian semi-serf, and can rely on the support of mighty forces.

And is there a definite connection between the old and new theories regarding West-East opposition? Kohn and his colleagues profess that they are against the Great-Power Pan-Slavism which once upon a time kept the East isolated

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<sup>1</sup> "United States Policy in the Cold War" by Hans Kohn. See *Current History*, October 1959, Vol. 37, No. 218, p. 197.

from the West. In reality, however, they are very close to those they repudiate. There is something common in the old and new East-West problems, but not at all in the way Kohn puts it.

One hundred or 150 years ago the East vs. West formula was a synonym of feudalism vs. capitalism. "Do not take the Western path" meant "do not attack feudalism". The present-day appeal "do not take the Eastern path" means "do not attack capitalism". In all else the old and new reactionaries are remarkably alike. The Kohns reaffirm yet once again that reaction everywhere is guided by one and the same desire—to prevent the peoples of its own and other countries from taking the path of progress.

But however hard the Kohns may try to isolate the West from the East, they will never succeed. History marches on past the Kohns and in spite of them. It knows neither the "Western" nor the "Eastern" path. It knows only one path of law-governed social progress, of transition from obsolete social forms to new, higher forms—from feudalism to capitalism and from capitalism to socialism and communism—to liberation of all peoples from slavery and misery, exploitation and wars.

### **Can Reaction Come to Know Its Enemy?**

"Something has gone wrong with our nation, or we should not be in our present plight and mood," the late John Foster Dulles, one of the initiators of the cold war, wrote in *War or Peace*. "What we lack is a righteous and dynamic faith. Without it, all else avails us little."<sup>1</sup> It was in this connection that he spoke of the imperative need for an ideological offensive "to combat successfully the methods and practices of a materialistic believe".<sup>2</sup> And the first principle of this strategy was the "know your enemy" commandment. The enemy, naturally, was communism in general and Soviet Russia in particular. "It is not easy to understand the doctrines of Soviet communism," Dulles wrote. "They are complicated and involve rather difficult mental gymnastics.

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<sup>1</sup> John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, New York, 1950, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> John Foster Duller, *Spiritual Legacy*, Philadelphia, 1959, p. 79.

But they have a powerful grip on millions of people throughout the world. If others can understand them, they are certainly not beyond the intelligence of Americans. . . . The mechanism of a time fuse may be complicated. But if such a fuse is attached to an explosive that may blow us into eternity, it is worth while to devote a little study to the mechanism which, so long as it ticks, is ticking off the minutes that we have left to live."<sup>1</sup>

Dulles's anxiety to "know" the enemy is understandable: the capitalist world—the world of exploitation, wars, colonialism, the crudest and subtlest violence, and shrewdest and undisguised lies—is shrivelling, shrinking and disappearing from the face of the earth. It is also easy to understand the bourgeois ideologists' uncommon interest in Russia's history: she was the first country in the world where the proletariat won its battle against the bourgeoisie, and this, the proletariat's first victory, has played a fatal role in the history of capitalism. The seemingly minor ailment of the capitalist system turned out to be a deadly disease, the "local" defeat inflicted upon the whiteguards and the interventionists on Russian soil precluded the imperialists' defeats in Asia and Africa, America and Europe. But Russia did more than just break out of bourgeois bondage. Having overcome tremendous difficulties, she is now preparing to be the first to enter communism, the first to outpace the leading bourgeois countries economically. And this immeasurably enhances the power of attraction of the communist ideas all the world over.

The bourgeois would like to change the course of history, to wrest victory from communism. It would like to learn to avoid defeat, to preserve its power and riches. That is why it must turn to the past and study it. In doing so, it cannot but learn the lessons of history, and history says the system of exploitation and wars is doomed, for history is against it.

This immutable truth is fully confirmed by the development of the present-day Russian studies in the capitalist world. The countries of the "free West"—the United States, Britain and West Germany especially—are putting a colossal

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<sup>1</sup> John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, New York, 1950, pp. 6, 7.

effort into and spending huge sums on "psychological warfare", the development of the Soviet studies, the Ostforschung, and other special historical sciences. Hundreds of experts on Russia and the East are being trained with the aid of government subsidies and the Rockefeller, Ford, Dupont and Carnegie foundations, and in co-operation with the State Department and the Foreign Office. They have been ensured ideal working conditions and given every opportunity to publish their treatises. Within a brief period these specialists wrote dozens of monographs on diverse problems confronting the Soviet studies, hundreds of special articles in "scientific" journals, and thousands of articles in newspapers and sensationalistic magazines of the *Time* and *Life* type. That was the start of the ideological "offensive" against communism. The "specialists" dashed headlong into battle. It must be admitted that they achieved certain quantitative "results". Hundreds and thousands of "manuals on communism" were published, and scores and hundreds of books about Soviet Russia. There was an incredible din raised about "victories". The reviews, thousands of them, were chokeful of praise. There were awards, prizes, promotions. . . .

But it soon became obvious that the bourgeoisie's attempts to delude people had turned into self-delusion. The Communists' successes surprised their enemies. There appeared another branch in the Russian studies—one designed to investigate why these "studies" were not producing the desired results. The capitalist press began to complain more and more. Why is it, the newspapers asked, that we plan an offensive against communism, launch this offensive, shout about this offensive, yell about our victory, and finally find that we have again lost and the Communists won. The modern Russian studies blossomed out beautifully, it seemed, and turned out to be completely unproductive of results. "Nobody is an expert on Russia," U.S. General Nathan F. Twining said in 1956 on his return from the Soviet Union. "There are just varying degrees of ignorance."<sup>1</sup>

This admission confirms that reactionary scientists can fulfil the social orders placed with them by reactionary politicians but are absolutely incapable of really helping

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<sup>1</sup> See F. Schuman, *Russia Since 1917*, p. VII.

them. However much money is invested in this science, all it is able to do is scientifically elaborate the "myths and fables" cultivated "at the highest level" (Schuman) and substantiate the arguments indispensable to justify the same old reactionary policy.

The general sees things with a soldier's eye: what would happen if reconnaissance deliberately supplied false information about the enemy and operational plans were drawn up on the basis of this information? What would happen if the fire adjusters constantly gave the wrong co-ordinates and the sights consequently were maladjusted? Such operations and such fire would mean defeat and waste of munitions. And, when possible, the parties responsible are disciplined.

But what punishment can one mete out for the bourgeoisie's incessant political and ideological slips? Real self-criticism is unthinkable, it is suicide, for it is not at all a case of "intelligence", as it seemed to Dulles, but one of social abilities.

Frankly speaking, the solution of the question was predetermined by the manner Dulles had posed it, and because it was posed wrong the solution was wrong too. From the very beginning it aimed not at "learning to know communism" and not at "studying" it but at finding and fabricating facts confirming the pre-ordained "conclusions" that communism was an absolute evil. The idea was to lie about communism, not to study it; to vilify it. That was how Dulles's behest was to be understood. That is how it was understood and translated into a reality by those it had been given to.

Anti-communist propaganda was based on two ideas. The first was that the Soviet Union was aggressive. The second that it was poor because it was spending everything on armaments with a view to conquering the world by violence. But time irrefutably proved two facts. The first was that the Soviet Union was sincerely peaceful. The second was that there were vast achievements and, moreover, inexhaustible opportunities and grand prospects under socialism to improve living standards. Another contradiction—one that is growing constantly—is that between what the reactionary politicians and ideologists tell the people of the capitalist countries about socialism and what people see for themselves.

The Kohns had been harping on Russian communism's "aggressiveness" for decades. But people saw, heard and learned that this communism, having grown stronger than capitalism militarily, was still proposing coexistence and general and complete disarmament. For decades the Kohns had been alleging that socialism means poverty, that the Communists had to deprive the people of the barest necessities to build up heavy industry. And ten or fifteen years after the most devastating war in Russian history the "slaves of communism" set themselves the task of introducing the shortest working day in the world and achieving the highest living standard. The peoples of the capitalist countries learned all this by themselves, without the aid of any media, of the "experts on Russia"; more, in spite of the latter's efforts to prevent them from doing it. The big lie began to dissipate, and there appeared a real danger of defeat for the cold warriors. This led to confusion and differences in their camp. They found themselves at the cross-roads, they tried to manoeuvre, they made a step forward under public pressure, to the policy of peaceful coexistence, and then, because of their class interests, two steps back, to the policy of cold war. They agreed to exchange exhibitions to help the Soviet and American peoples know each other better, and then took advantage of Vice-President Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union to railroad through Congress their notorious (largely by its primitiveness) resolution on the "slaves of communism". They urged looking the truth "in the face" and at the same time started a new crusade of lies. This is testified to by Nixon's programme of anti-communist struggle and his prophecy that the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union would last at least fifty years.

Modern capitalism, which would like to be the only system in the world and an immortal one, is hastening its own end. The bourgeoisie and its ideologists are deluding not only the peoples but themselves too. What is more, they are aware of that. The Kohns and their bosses know how much it costs capitalism not to disintegrate completely and they know the price of Kohn's "discoveries". Nevertheless, in their manuals, they try to assure the bourgeoisie that it is young, and the rejuvenated bourgeoisie, in its turn, declares that the Kohns are "the leading historians of today". It is a



wonderful picture of the "boom" of both capitalism and its historical "science". And every such "boom" is inevitably followed by a recession.

### Real Lessons of Russian History

And yet the real history of Russia could teach the modern bourgeois world a lot. The experience accumulated by world communism, the experience of the Russian socialist revolution, is really vast and unparalleled in instructive value.

The destinies of history are in the hands of the masses. The classes and parties whose selfish interests are contrary to those of the people sooner or later disappear from the historical scene. This old and ever new truth is graphically confirmed by the victories achieved by socialism in the past few decades.

It was this elementary truth that does not require any "difficult mental gymnastics" that John Reed, the outstanding internationalist, patriot and truth-seeker, tried to bring home to the American people in the first years of the October Revolution in Russia. "Not by compromise with the propertied classes, or with the other political leaders; not by conciliating the old government mechanism, did the Bolsheviks conquer the power. Nor by the organised violence of a small clique," he wrote in his famous *Ten Days That Shook the World*. "... The only reason for Bolshevik success lay in their accomplishing the vast and simple desires of the most profound strata of the people, calling them to the work of tearing down and destroying the old, and afterwards, in the smoke of falling ruins, co-operating with them to erect the framework of the new..."<sup>1</sup>

This truth, as we have seen, was voiced by Hans Kohn

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<sup>1</sup>John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, New York, 1926, p. 292. In his biography of John Reed, written especially for the Russian edition of *Ten Days That Shook the World* (Moscow, 1957, pp. 345-61), Albert Rhys Williams describes the difficulties Reed had to go through in the United States. Justice Department officials sought to confiscate his documents about the Russian revolution, several attempts were made to steal his manuscript at the printing plant, newspapers refused to publish him, he was arrested about twenty times!

too, in his early work *The Meaning and Destiny of the Revolution*, when he wrote: "The Bolsheviks merely carried out the people's programme and therein lay their strength, their mission. Theirs was the only real revolution, if revolution means realisation of the people's aspirations."<sup>1</sup>

What is more, valuable admissions regarding the nature of the Russian revolution have been made even by Russian bourgeois leaders.

"Frankly speaking, we must change our ideas (that is, the ideas of the bourgeois politicians—*Authors*) about the ability of individual human will to direct such mass phenomena as a people's revolution," Cadet leader Milyukov wrote in 1920, summing up the lessons of the October Revolution and the civil war. "The role played by the leaders (the leaders of the bourgeoisie, naturally—*Authors*) in the events turns out to be less active, and so it is necessary radically to revise the current idea about the passive role of the inert masses. . . . The masses accepted from the revolution what accorded with their wishes. . . . It is only now, some time after the events, that we begin to see, though still not very clearly, that there was collective folk wisdom in the conduct of the inert, ignorant and downtrodden masses. . . . When the time comes to sum up the results of the vast changes we are going through, we shall most probably see the same things we have seen studying the great French revolution. Whole classes have crumbled, the traditions of the cultured stratum have come to an end, but the people have embarked upon a new life, having enriched themselves by new experience and decided for themselves the most vital of all questions—the question of land."<sup>2</sup>

Milyukov reiterated this in his book *Republic or Monarchy* in 1929. "When we now say that the people themselves will decide about their political destiny," he wrote, "this is no longer an empty phrase but recognition of the fact that for twelve years the masses have taken a direct part in the people's revolution."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohn, *Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> P. Milyukov, *Istoriya Vtoroi Russkoi Revolutsii (History of the Second Russian Revolution)*, Vol. I, Sofia, 1921, pp. 5, 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> P. Milyukov, *Respublika ili monarkhiya (Republic or Monarchy)*, Paris, 1929, p. 29.

Despite these valuable admissions, Milyukov, it must be stressed, remained an enemy of communism. The leader of the Russian bourgeoisie "saw light" only when he realised that his trump cards—force and lies—had been beaten. His resort to truth was merely a "new tactics"—an attempt to make believe that his patently counter-revolutionary programme aimed at defending people's interests. There is a big gap between the bourgeois politician's recognition of people's interests by word of mouth and his recognition of these interests in deed. Russian Cadetism could not bridge this gap, it found its death at its bottom.

Although the bourgeoisie has not changed since then, there are forces now which can compel the bourgeoisie, where it is still in power, to respect the people's interests. The experience of the Russian revolution could indeed help the bourgeois politicians realise the need to do so. But it must be the real experience, the one reflected, though partially and superficially, in Milyukov's post-revolution writings, and not the experience in the form presented by "Russian specialists" like Kohn. What is more, this experience is infinitely important in our day of the peaceful coexistence and competition of the two different systems.

Peace was one of the main questions which decided the issue of the struggle between the Russian bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In 1917, that fatal year for the Russian bourgeoisie, peace was absolutely indispensable and vital for Russia. The future of Russia, the destinies of the people and the state depended on peace. In this decisive question the Russian bourgeoisie followed in the footsteps of tsarism and betrayed the people. Its class interests and ties with international imperialism impelled it to continue the senseless slaughter, to maim and kill hundreds of thousands and millions of people. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, upheld the people's interests in this key issue all through the world war. Their peace slogan was not a transient one, nor adjustment to the mood of the masses. They stood for peace when the masses were swept off their feet by petty-bourgeois "defence of the fatherland" ideas and allowed themselves to be persuaded by bourgeois politicians, and for a time the Bolsheviks went against the sentiments of the deluded masses. The Bolsheviks stood for peace when the masses overcame

this intoxication and began to support them, the Bolsheviks. And they stood for peace after they had taken power into their hands. It was not for nothing that Lenin's first report as Chairman of the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government was the report on peace.

The peace or war issue history confronts the peoples and the governments with is now greater and more crucial than in those days. For today it is not only a question of the existence of some states but of the whole world. It has arisen not in the course of a war but before it, for the weapons of destruction are being developed on a gigantic scale, and if the reactionary forces unleash a new conflict there will be no chance to think about it. Extermination of tens and hundreds of millions of people and devastation of whole countries and continents—that is what awaits mankind in such a case.

Bourgeois ideologists have always alleged that the proletariat and the Communist Parties know only one way of overthrowing capitalism—by means of violence and bloody revolution, that they want to impose socialism by force of arms.

The proletariat and its party hold that history is advancing to the victory of communism, to the social death of capitalism. The system which has brought mankind ruthless exploitation, innumerable wars and devastation, is doomed. Even the bourgeoisie is coming to realise this, in its own way, and this compels its ideologists to look for new, "fresh" names for their moribund society—such as "free society", "people's capitalism", etc. This does not mean that imperialism's nature has changed. It merely means that it has reached the age when it is afraid to look at itself.

What form the inevitable revolution will assume in their countries—will it be bloody or bloodless, peaceful or not?—depends above all on the bourgeoisie itself and its politicians. When the Bolshevik Party embarked upon the path of socialist revolution after the overthrow of tsarism in February 1917, Lenin said that there was a "highly rare" and "highly valuable" opportunity to accomplish it peacefully. True, this opportunity soon disappeared: no sooner had the bourgeoisie assumed control of the armed forces than it tried to smash the revolution and was itself overthrown by the armed up-

rising in October. But since the proletarian uprising had the support of the overwhelming majority of the population, the October Revolution turned out to be *the least bloody* in history. The Bolsheviks did not aim at physically exterminating their enemies "with the aid of the Extraordinary Commission", as present-day "historians" like Kohn now write in describing the establishment of Soviet power. They aimed at peacefully building a new economy with the aid of bourgeois specialists.

Who "fired" the first shot? Who started the civil war and intervention? Who first resorted to terror as a weapon of struggle? All this was done solely by the Russian and international bourgeoisie, Russian and international reaction. It was their ideologists and politicians who, on the eve of the October Revolution, launched the notorious slogan urging to "strangle the revolution with the bony hand of famine", and they who after the October Revolution, urged to "strangle Bolshevism at birth".

The bitter armed resistance by the bourgeoisie was alone responsible for the incredibly severe and bloody forms of civil war, for the unheard-of suffering it brought the Russian people. But these forms and methods of establishing Soviet power in Russia were something exceptional in this case, and not common to the international proletarian movement in general. Lenin stressed this dozens of times. "In a country where the bourgeoisie will not offer such furious resistance," he said, "the tasks of the Soviet government will be easier; it will be able to operate without the violence, without the bloodshed that was forced upon us by the Kerenskys and the imperialists."<sup>1</sup>

For the Communists, the peaceful accomplishment of the socialist revolution is not merely a question of tactics, it is one involving the whole of their humanistic world outlook. "The working class and its vanguard—the Marxist-Leninist party—seek to achieve the socialist revolution by peaceful means," says the Declaration of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries held in Moscow in November 1957. "This would accord with the interests of the working class and the entire

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 270-71.

people, with the national interests of the country." As for the other possibility—non-peaceful transition to socialism, "the degree of bitterness and the forms of the class struggle will depend not so much on the proletariat as on the resistance put up by the reactionary circles to the will of the overwhelming majority of the people, on these circles using force at one or another stage of the struggle for socialism".<sup>1</sup> This was also reaffirmed in the Statement of the Moscow Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties in 1960.

Imperialism's nature has not changed. But the correlation of forces between capitalism and socialism has, and this has made it possible, for the first time in history, to check the imperialists' aggressive actions in the international arena, to force peace upon them. Whether they like it or not, the imperialists must reckon with the fact that any attempt to destroy communism by unleashing another world war will mean their own end.

And it must be said that certain Western bourgeois leaders are beginning to show sense—the sense the leaders of the Russian bourgeoisie did not have or showed too late.

There are now two trends existing objectively and independently of the fact that the Western bourgeois leaders concerned may sharply alter their views. The representatives of the first trend, which held sway in the past, maintain that there is no way of combating communism other than war and lies. This trend ultimately found expression in the notorious "positions of strength", in reliance on the power of American nuclear weapons, in the ignominious fiasco of the anti-communist hysteria of 1956-57, and in the scuttling of the Summit Conference in 1960.

The representatives of the second trend, while standing up in defence of capitalism and being even certain that it will prevail in the end, recognise that peaceful coexistence is both logical and necessary. They are learning this slowly and painfully, and only under the pressure of their peoples.

The imperialists take every chance, however little, to try to drown the national liberation movement in blood. The murder of Patrice Lumumba, Africa's national hero, and

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<sup>1</sup> *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Moscow, pp. 18-19.

his comrades by the Belgian colonialists with the active support of their NATO partners, the unleashing of the civil war in Laos, the attempts to export counter-revolution to Cuba and U.S. aggression in Vietnam—all this shows clearly what weapons reaction employs and will employ if it is not bridled.

That is why, though firmly confident that peace, democracy and socialism will triumph in the end, we know that they will triumph only in bitter struggle which requires maximum effort.

The peaceful coexistence of different social systems will at the same time be peaceful competition. The general disarmament proposed by the Communists does not mean their ideological disarmament. The peaceful coexistence of the two systems does not mean cessation of the ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism. This struggle *will intensify still more* when, to quote Marx, "criticism by weapons" is finally replaced by the "weapon of criticism". But the Communists and the cold-war ideologists have different ideas about the "weapon of criticism". Objective conclusions, obvious facts, convincing examples—these are the weapons we employ in our ideological struggle. One cannot renounce force as a means of settling controversial issues and at the same time retain lies as the main ideological weapon, for lies whip up fear and hate and they eventually lead to war. *It is impossible to settle controversial issues either by force of arms or with the aid of lies. That is why the struggle for peaceful coexistence is two struggles rolled in one—against war and against lies.*

## CONCLUSION

We have looked into only one page of the book called "modern bourgeois science". But even this one page makes it easy to imagine what the "free Western society" with its contradictory trends, its good and evil, its truth and lies, is really like.

What are the Kohns like in life—at work and at home, what do they think and feel when they use ellipses, write their books, admire the glossy jackets of their new books, read eulogistic reviews and receive royalties, succeed in their career and become doctors, professors, fellows and presidents of learned societies? What do they really think and feel when they lecture students? What do they say of themselves in public and what do they really know of themselves? How do they feel when they lie today where yesterday they said the truth? What is their attitude to people? How do they sum up the results of their life activity? What do they believe in, what do they dream of, what would they do in this world if they had complete freedom? When and how did they first sin in science? There is a multitude of questions. They are very interesting and very important. But that is where the sphere of social science ends and the sphere of the arts and literature begins. That is where sociology ends and psychology begins. Much has been and is being written by novelists about the bourgeois intelligentsia, its substance and spirit. There are many wonderful books whose characters somewhat resemble Kohn, his bosses, his colleagues and his opponents. Suffice it to recall just two books—Mitchell



Wilson's *Live with Lightning* and Jay Deiss's *The Blue Chips*. Their heroes, Erik Gorin and Howell Winslow, had to answer the question that confronts in one way or another every intellectual in the capitalist world: is passion for science compatible with its subordination to reactionary politics and big business?

It is quite possible that the details of Kohn's apostasy will remain a mystery known to him alone. The substance of such apostasy and its general nature have long been known to and depicted by artists. But the arts and social science are two paths to the cognition of one and the same subject—the life of society. It is quite natural, therefore, to find a precise scientific analysis of Hans Kohn's activity in Marxist social science.

Kohn and his colleagues regard Marxism as hopelessly "obsolete". A bourgeois historian would not be a bourgeois historian if he did not utter these traditional words when, contrary to all logic, he set out to repudiate the "dead" enemy for the thousand and first time, prudently preferring to fight not Marxism itself but his own fables about Marxism. There is not a single aspect of Marxism-Leninism that Prof. Kohn really understands. And there is no aspect of the Professor's work which is not exhaustively dealt with by the Marxist classics. They painted his portrait a long time ago, long before he was born.

"Facts are stubborn things, runs the English saying," Lenin wrote. "It comes to mind, in particular, when a certain author waxes enthusiastic about the greatness of the 'nationality principle' in its different implications and relationships. What is more, in most cases the 'principle' is applied just as aptly, and is just as much in place, as the exclamation 'many happy returns of the day' by a certain folk-tale character at the sight of a funeral.

"Precise facts, indisputable facts—they are especially abhorrent to this type of author, but are especially necessary if we want to form a proper understanding of this complicated, difficult and often deliberately confused question.... The most widely used, and most fallacious, method in the realm of social phenomena is to tear out *individual* minor facts and juggle with example. Selecting chance examples presents no difficulty at all, but is of no value, or of purely

negative value, for in each individual case everything hinges on the historically concrete situation. Facts, if we take them in their *entirety*, in their *interconnection*, are not only stubborn things, but undoubtedly proof-bearing things. Minor facts, if taken out of their entirety, out of their interconnection, if they are arbitrarily selected and torn out of context, are merely things for juggling, or even worse. For instance, when an author who was once a serious author and wishes to be regarded as such now too takes the fact of the Mongolian yoke and presents it as an example that explains certain events in twentieth-century Europe, can this be considered merely juggling, or would it not be more correct to consider it political chicanery? The Mongolian yoke is a fact of history, and one doubtlessly connected with the national question, just as in twentieth-century Europe we observe a number of facts likewise doubtlessly connected with this question. But you will find few people—of the type the French describe as ‘national clowns’—who would venture, while claiming to be serious, to use this fact of the Mongolian yoke as an illustration of events in twentieth-century Europe.”<sup>1</sup>

Every line, every word of this brilliant characteristic applies perfectly to our “theoretician” of nationalism. For it is he, Hans Kohn, who once was serious and wanted to be considered serious, who now has become a “national clown”, a political trickster juggling with examples, tearing out minor individual facts, and using the “facts” of the Mongolian yoke as an illustration of events in twentieth-century Russia.

And don’t the Professor’s latest “scientific” discoveries confirm Engels’s words about the dray horse of the commonplace bourgeois intellect stuck before a moat that “separates essence from appearance, cause from effect”?<sup>2</sup>

And don’t Lenin’s words “expelling *laws* from science means, in fact, *smuggling in the laws of religion*”<sup>3</sup> fully apply to Kohn?

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 271-72.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1958, Vol. 1, p. 371.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 202.

When Marx wrote that the selfless quest for the truth in bourgeois social science had given way to bickerings among the venal scribblers, when he spoke of the fall of Guizot, who not only lost his mind as a historian but even stopped to understand what he was doing, when he exclaimed that it was not the kings who came and went but the talents of the bourgeoisie too,<sup>1</sup> he had Hans Kohn in mind also.

"The bourgeoisie turns everything into a commodity, and this means history too," Engels wrote. "It is in its very nature, due to the conditions of its existence, to adulterate every commodity, and so it has adulterated history also. For the best-paid work is the one in which adulteration of history best suits the interests of the bourgeoisie."<sup>2</sup> And isn't the history written by Kohn the same kind of adulterated commodity?

We could cite a great many more such characteristics but the ones above suffice to give a true-to-life picture of Hans Kohn. Yes, all this is said of Kohn, but then not only of him. Many of his colleagues could recognise themselves in these characteristics too. What is especially remarkable is that Marx, Engels and Lenin painted Kohn's portrait without knowing him, but knowing the Kohns as a social phenomenon. And that is why they saw through all the past, present and future Kohns, exposed their methodology and attitude to the facts, foresaw their scientific career, and analysed the causes of the degeneration of science in bourgeois society, where sooner or later the scientist is faced with the choice of breaking completely with the interests of the bourgeoisie or prostituting himself. This explains what at first sight is a paradox: Marx, Engels and Lenin, whom Kohn has "repudiated", painted a true-to-life portrait of their "critic" long before his birth; Kohn, who started out to repudiate Marxism-Leninism, ended up by acknowledging it. Will Hans Kohn ever understand this paradox?

"There is no royal road to science, and only those who do

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Berlin, 1960, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Central Party Archives, Institute of Marxism-Leninism.

not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits," Marx wrote of the lot of scientists.<sup>1</sup> In his youth, Hans Kohn also ventured to storm these luminous summits. He climbed up the beaten track to the first ledge and then, frightened by his own recklessness, decided that it would be safer to come down. Since then he has been "clambering" down, and not up, the rocky tracks until he has found himself in a bog from which he is slinging mud at the luminous summit he has not been fated to reach. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, p. 21.

## AFTERWORD

When, several years after the publication of this book (1961), we were asked to prepare its English edition, we wondered whether we should add anything.

For in these four years there appeared new facts and new books by Hans Kohn—*Reflections on Modern History*, *The Historian and Human Responsibility* and *Living in a World Revolution*, *My Encounters with History*. The titles of these two books, both published in 1963, show that this celebrated American historian is still devoting his efforts to the broad aspects of world history and expanding the list of his "epoch-making" works. The Professor has also continued with his methodological studies. He has put out a collection of essays on the "European intellectual history" under the title *The Modern World, 1848 to the Present* (1963) and has, in co-operation with Swiss historian Doerig, published a symposium entitled *Marx vs. Russia* (1962).

Closer acquaintance with the facts, however, has made it unnecessary to add anything substantial to the book. *Reflections on Modern History* has turned out to be nothing but a compilation of Kohn's old articles. The only new thing is the title. We have not yet seen *Living in a World Revolution* and *The Modern World*—our libraries have not received them so far. As for *Marx vs. Russia*, we shall confine ourselves to a very brief review of the places from the symposium which bear directly on our book.

The methodology and aims of *Marx vs. Russia* are quite elementary. Having selected a few dozen places from Marx's and Engels's correspondence during the Crimean War of 1853-56 in which they denounced the foreign policy of Russian tsarism, isolated them from the general context of Marx's works, and appropriately doctored them,<sup>1</sup> Professor Kohn and Professor Doerig try to persuade the reader that Marx "warned the West of Russia's unchanging expansionist aims" and that all his "warnings" are just as "timely" today.

Such allegedly Marxian proofs, which ignore Marx's real opinion and all that has taken place in Europe and Russia in the hundred years since then, are absolutely worthless in the eyes of any unbiased reader. But it would be wrong to say that this study is altogether worthless—it is difficult to find a better proof of the fact that the Professor's speciality is not history but abuse of history.

We are publishing this book fully convinced that we are right and with a feeling of satisfaction: Prof. Kohn has justified our opinion of him. Ten years ago, in *The Mind of Modern Russia*, he juggled with quotations to turn Lenin into an "enemy" of the West. Now, using the same methods, he is turning Marx into an "enemy" of Russia.

*Marx vs. Russia* does not only confirm the correctness of our characterisation of Hans Kohn's "scientific" pursuits and methodology. It adds the last touch that was missing in the characterisation of his moral make-up. Hitherto, he has been proclaiming himself an enemy of Communist Marx, holding that Marxism is "class-prejudiced", "metaphysical" and, what is more important still, an "obsolete" science long excelled by the historical science of the twentieth century. And now this same Professor unhesitatingly subscribes to Marx's "fascinat-

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<sup>1</sup> The "study" conceals the fact that Marx connected the ultimate solution of the "Eastern question" with the revolution, including the impending Russian revolution, which would overthrow absolutism. Its compilers threw out all the concrete historical references to the Crimean War and gave the chapters such "modern-sounding" titles as "Russia Pursues a Policy of Political Extortion", "Russian Promises and What They Are Worth", "Appeasement Policy of the Western Powers Toward Russia".

ing" correspondence and, together with Doerig, proclaims it practically prophetic. What's happened? Since Kohn's attitude to Marx has not changed in principle, it only remains to say that what has happened is a sort of negation of negation. Falsified by Professor Doerig and Professor Kohn, the texts of the "non-objective" and "class-prejudiced" Marx have apparently acquired the measure of "objectivity" conforming to the standards of "Western science".

*Y. Karyakin and Y. Plimak*

#### REQUEST TO READERS

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*Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*